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**The Construction of Malaysian
Airlines Tragedies MH370 and
MH17 in the Malaysian and British
Newspapers: A Multidisciplinary
Study**

THENG THENG ONG

PhD

2019

The Construction of Malaysian Airlines Tragedies MH370 and MH17 in the Malaysian and British Newspapers: A Multidisciplinary Study

THENG THENG ONG

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the University
of Northumbria at Newcastle for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the Faculty of
Arts, Design & Social Sciences

JANUARY 2019

Abstract

The Construction of Malaysian Airlines Tragedies MH370 and MH17 in the Malaysian and British Newspapers: A Multidisciplinary Study

Human suffering is often constructed differently across countries with a classification between 'Us' and 'Others': indicating a power division between danger and safety, peace and war, prosperity and poverty (Chouliaraki, 2011: 608). Indeed, the ways in which the news media represent the suffering of 'Others' has been supported the findings of a number of studies (e.g. Ashlin and Ladle 2007; Joye, 2010; Chouliaraki, 2011). However, one issue constraining research on suffering is that it is usually studied from one perspective, i.e., as either distant suffering or local suffering. There is also a lack of information of how the same suffering is constructed locally as well as internationally. In addition, prior research has been conducted principally in the areas of health environment and journalism and public attitudes towards mediated suffering have been neglected. Little attention has been given to language as the main medium of communication between audiences and newsmakers.

For the reasons detailed above, it seems crucial to focus on the role of the mass media in the connection of audiences with suffering. Hence, the present study attempts to extend prior equivalent research by comparing and contrasting the ways in which the Malaysian Airlines tragedies MH370 and MH17 are linguistically constructed in Malaysian newspapers, as a local suffering, and in the United Kingdom (UK) newspapers as a distant suffering. A further study was also conducted to investigate Malaysian and UK nationals' attitudes toward the Airlines tragedies.

In depth analysis of the newspaper content using Sketch Engine shows that the topics of aircraft-related matters and countries/nationalities were important to the news reporting of the air tragedies. Essentially, the analysis suggested a tendency of the news media to construct the air tragedies with a classification between 'Us' and 'Others'. The division was featured in two dominant discursive modes: '*honorification*' and '*anonymity*'. In contrast, analysis of the attitudinal data, demonstrated that, for both the Malaysian and UK respondents, the most salient associations with the MH370 tragedy related to '*conflict*' and, for the MH17 tragedy, '*emotions*'.

It is hoped that the findings of the present study offer a useful contribution to language and media studies, and provide a more comprehensive understanding of discourses and ideologies surrounding the two sufferings and their public uptake. Methodologically, the present study also demonstrated the value of triangulating a corpus-based discourse study and an attitudinal study, by offering a more comprehensive and rigorous picture of public discourse of the air tragedies. The results of study also indicated that keywords analysis is also useful to examine both media and public discourse, offering information regarding both the most salient topics presented in the news corpora and the audience attitudes towards the sufferings.

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Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the University Ethics Committee on 6th June 2016 (for the newspapers analysis) and 5th April 2017 (for the language attitudes study).

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 76, 583 words.

Name: Theng Theng Ong

Signature:

Date: 9th January 2019

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 General aims

In 2014, there were 20,218 documented civilian deaths in the Iraq war (Statista, 2018a), 7,823 people killed by natural disasters (Guha-Sapir et al., 2015), and 1,328 people died in air crashes,¹ including of two Malaysian Airlines in the disappearance of flight MH370 and the dramatic loss of MH17. The numbers of the dead reflect an extreme of human suffering around the globe. Acknowledging the rise of global suffering, scholars from different disciplines have been paying attention to the relationship between suffering and media (Joye, 2012). As stated by Miller & Albert (2015: 61), 'if it bleeds, it leads'. In other words, events characterised by fatalities are likely to attract greater media coverage. This increasing academic attention has resulted in a wide range of research foci, such as representations of distant suffering (e.g. Joye, 2009; Boltanski, 1999; Chouliaraki, 2011), media witnessing (e.g. Kyriakidou, 2015; Höijer, 2004), recovery discourse (e.g. Cox et al., 2008; Bonanno et al., 2010) and audience reactions towards mediated suffering (e.g. Huiberts & Joye, 2017; Seu, 2015). In addition, some studies are more concerned with the representation of a particular crisis in the media, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (e.g. Washer, 2004; Chung, 2011; Berry et al., 2007), tsunamis (e.g. Ashlin & Ladle, 2007), bonfire tragedies (e.g. Gortner & Pennebaker, 2003), and flood disasters (e.g. Rashid, 2011).

While recognising the diversity of studies and the richness of ongoing academic research, we know little about the representation of air disasters in the media. According to a report published by the Air Transport Action Group², air transport is one of the world's most important industries and it provides crucial social benefits. For instance, air transport can promote social inclusion by providing the only means of transportation in remote areas. In other words, it improves the quality of life by connecting people around the world and broadening people's cultural experiences. In 2017, commercial airlines carried nearly four billion passengers, which is equivalent to half of the world's population (Statista, 2018b). Therefore, the investigation of aircraft accidents in the media is important in showing the safety of air transport across the world, helping passengers to make better decisions. In addition, the study may also help to shape the future of airline management, which, in turn, will influence our travel experiences.

Within the scope of this thesis, it would be impossible to present an all-inclusive and comprehensive overview of suffering in different disasters. Therefore, the research mainly explores suffering in relation to the Malaysian Airlines tragedies in flights MH370 and MH17 in the news media. More specifically, the present study investigates the ways in which the two air accidents were linguistically constructed in Malaysian and UK newspapers. This study attempts to make a contribution to the understanding of the relationship between media discourse and audience attitudes towards air tragedies. This is a multidisciplinary study, which consists of corpus linguistics research, critical discourse analysis and a study of attitudes. The aims of this project are threefold. Firstly, from a methodological perspective, it proposes an integration of corpus-based discourse analysis and an attitudes study. Through a comparison between media representations and public opinions, this study helps to address the extent to which media constructions of air crises are shared and/or refuted in the views of university students from the UK and Malaysia. From a linguistics perspective, the study investigates the ways in which air tragedies are constructed differently (or similarly) in newspapers in two different countries based on the lexical choices or keywords in their stories. Secondly, this study also attempts to identify attitudes among students towards the tragedies based on their choice of words. Thirdly, the study aims to shed light upon media discourses in describing the tragedies as objects that are socially constructed through discourse.

1.2 Why study suffering in relation to media?

There are several reasons to study suffering in relation to the media. Firstly, Joye (2012: 9) and Boltanski (1999) argued that disasters and other causes of suffering are usually distant events for people living in the developed world. Generally, information about such events can only be delivered to people through the media. Nevertheless, several studies have demonstrated that distant suffering is often constructed differently across the world, with a classification of 'us' and 'others', indicating an asymmetry of power between danger and safety, peace and war, prosperity and poverty (Chouliaraki, 2011: 608; Joye 2010). The representation of 'us' and 'others' is likely to affect the attitudes of the audience towards distant suffering, such as by restricting public action or influencing moral dispositions towards the suffering (Joye, 2012: 8). As indicated by Chouliaraki (2006: 2), the media presentation of suffering is an important focus of study precisely because it problematizes the nature of public action under conditions of mediation. More specifically, the study of suffering in relation to the media can help to reveal the

choices made by journalists when creating news texts concerning how sufferers are portrayed and how the scene of suffering is narrated (Chouliaraki, 2006: 3).

Moreover, Kitch & Hume (2008: xv) asserted that narratives about death have always been associated with powerful cultural practices. The media representation of suffering does not merely consist of a body of texts, but rather it is a cultural practice in which audience response to mediated suffering can shape future versions of the tale. In a similar vein, Chouliaraki (2006: 3) claimed that audience attitudes toward distant sufferers can ultimately shape the disposition of television publics regarding the misfortunes of distant others. Therefore, the study of mediated suffering is helpful in determining how news texts shape public ethics by shaping the audiences' encounters with distant suffering. In addition, such study may also help to reveal the ways in which one can and should act on the mediated events of suffering in terms of one's local or global social structures, power relations and different ethics of public life (Joye, 2012). A study of suffering in relation to the media may thus provide a useful understanding of the broader relationship between language and social, cultural and media discourses.

1.3 The suffering of MH370 and MH17

According to Ong, J. C (2015: 199), the news generally covers diverse forms of suffering including: nearby and distant, natural and human-made disasters, individual and collective, and pity-based and justice-based claims. The diverse forms of suffering have been widely studied, particularly regarding how Western media represent distant suffering (e.g. Boltanski, 1999; Joye, 2009, 2010; Chouliaraki, 2006; Von Engelhardt & Jansz, 2015). What have repeatedly been identified as important predictors of Western disaster coverage is the concept of '*distant*' in terms of geographical distance and perceived cultural and ethnic dissimilarity. To better understand the effect of '*distance*' on the representation of suffering in the news media, it is useful to identify the type of distance involved in the two air tragedies to Malaysia and the UK. Figure 1.1 distinguishes the two tragedies in terms of aircraft ownership, the nationality of victims and the locations of the incidents.

Figure 1.1. Summary of the Malaysian Airline tragedies MH370 and MH17

| Airline Tragedies | Summary | Aircraft ownership | Victims from home country | Site |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| MH370 | Disappear | Malaysia | 50 (Malaysian) 0 (British) | Indian Ocean (presumed) |
| MH17 | Shot down | Malaysia | 43 (Malaysian) 10 (British) | Eastern Ukraine |

As one can see from Figure 1.1, the UK was not directly impacted by the disappearance of flight MH370 based on the number of victims and location of the event. However, 10 British victims were involved in the tragedy of flight MH17. Based on the geographical distance between the air disasters and the UK, in conjunction with the number of victims involved, these air accidents can be classified as relating to distant suffering in the UK. As indicated by Boltanski (1999: 3) and Joye (2012: 4), distant suffering refers to moral and political issues for the audience who are not directly affected by or involved in the tragedy. In contrast, Malaysia seems to be directly affected by both air tragedies, based on the number of victims and the ownership of the two aircraft. In fact, Malaysia Airlines also suffered major financial losses and damage to its image as a result of the two air tragedies.³ Therefore, the tragedies can be reasonably assumed to relate to local suffering in Malaysia. It is anticipated that the different forms of suffering would contribute to different representations, involving different uses of language in newspapers. In addition, UK and Malaysian audiences may also hold different attitudes towards the tragedies as local or distant suffering.

1.4 The background to this study

1.4.1 The Malaysian Airlines Tragedies

In 2014, more than six major airline disasters occurred across the world and three of them involved Malaysia airlines⁴. The Malaysian airline tragedies consist of the disappearance of flight MH370, the shooting down of flight MH17, and the crashing of flight QZ8501. It is pertinent to mention that the initial plan for the present study included an examination of all three Malaysian air tragedies. However, based on the pilot test results (see section 4.5), the third air tragedy of the crash of Air Asia flight QZ8501 was excluded from the study. This decision was made due to the unfamiliarity of UK students with this specific air tragedy that would be likely to restrict them from offering keywords related to the air tragedy in the attitudes study. As a result, the

study focuses only on the air tragedies of flights MH370 and MH17. A brief summary of the two tragedies is provided in the following sub-section based on information provided by the news media.

The disappearance of flight MH370

On 8 March 2014, officials lost contact with Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 an hour after departure. The flight was on its way from Kuala Lumpur International Airport to Beijing Capital International Airport, carrying 12 Malaysian crew members and 227 passengers from 15 nations. On January 2015, the Malaysian government officially declared the disappearance of flight MH370 an accident, claiming that there were no survivors. Weeks after the declaration, wild rumours and various theories continued to spread about the fate of MH370. Due to the continuing failure to find the aircraft, the media (including theorists and the public) presented their own explanations of the missing aircraft. Furthermore, uncertainty and the lack of clarification from Malaysian officials about the aircraft's disappearance allowed rumours to flourish.

According to Weaver & Urquhart (2014), the Malaysian authorities leading the search operation added to the confusion about the flight's last known location. For instance, the authorities had initially claimed that contact with the aircraft was lost at 1.20 am on the eastern side of the peninsula. However, the authorities made a different statement later at a hostile press conference, claiming that the last possible recording of flight MH370 was at 2.15 am, 200 miles North West of Penang, Malaysia. In fact, experts argued that Malaysia's response to the disappearance of MH370 was one of the worst example of crisis management ever seen (Swallow, 2014). In addition, the inaccurate and contradictory information provided by the Malaysian authorities seemingly provoked anger among relatives of the passengers (Weaver & Urquhart, *ibid*). Indeed, they demanded that the Malaysian prime minister should apologise for what they regarded as misleading statements (Williamson, 2014). However, Hussein (the Acting Malaysian Transport Minister at the time) rejected the criticism that the information issued had been misleading, and instead pointed out that the information was changing.

In October 2017, the final report into flight MH370's disappearance was delivered by Australian investigators, claiming that the fact the plane had yet to be found was a 'great tragedy'. In fact, failure by the government to identify remains from flight MH370 had caused great suffering among the families of the passengers on board who did

not know what had happened to their loved ones. As stated by Boss (2014), families of the passengers of flight MH370 may be faced with a lifetime of unresolved grief because there was no possibility of resolution.

The shooting down of flight MH17

The shooting down of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 on 17 July 2014 added to speculation and created a space for the public to question the safety of Malaysian airline flights. Flight MH17 was scheduled to fly from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur but was shot down and crashed in eastern Ukraine near to the border with Russia. The incident killed all 283 passengers and 15 crew on board. The jet crashed over rebel-held territory fought over by pro-Russian militants and Ukrainian troops within an area which had been declared a no-fly zone. After the incident, families, friends and mourners from around the world united on social media to express their horror and sadness over the disaster (Walmsley, 2014).

According to Klompenhouwer (2014), the victims' families suffered incessantly from the incident because they needed to follow every story to stay informed about every detail. More specifically, when pro-Russia rebels refused to remove bodies from the crash site, the families were constantly worried that they may not be able to bury their loved ones (ibid). At the same time, independent investigators were denied proper access to the crash site by masked and armed separatists who were accused of trying to destroy evidence (Mendick et al., 2014). However, on 21 July 2014, the bodies of the passengers of MH17 were finally moved home from the crash site (Torez, 2014).

In September 2016, the Dutch-led Joint Investigation team (JIT) released a report which confirmed that the plane was shot down by a Russian BUK missile and was fired from a field controlled by pro-Russian fighters.⁵ Although the Russian government refuted the JIT's findings and accused the report of being biased and politically motivated, the JIT agreed that suspects should be prosecuted in a Dutch court.

1.4.2 The Newspapers

The power of newspapers in relation to the selection, extent, frequency and nature of their reporting, coupled with their availability for corpus compilation, make them an excellent source of data (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008: 9). In the present study, news

corpora are compiled from two Malaysian newspapers and two UK newspapers. A detailed discussion and justification of the selection of the newspapers is presented in chapter 4 (section 4.3). In this section, a brief review of newspapers in Malaysia and the UK is provided.

Malaysian English newspapers

In Malaysia, the official language is Malay. English is generally learnt as a second language (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014). The importance of the English language in Malaysia is influenced by the fact that Malaysia was under British rule from the 18th to 20th centuries. During this period, the English language was promoted in the fields of education, politics and economics (Thirusanku & Yunus, *ibid*). In the nineteenth century, more than forty English language newspapers were published in the Malay peninsula (Mohd Sani, 2009: 31). These newspapers were published by the British colonial administrator to serve British interests and for business purposes (Mohd Sani, *ibid*).

Mohd Sani (2009) further argued that these English newspapers were dominated and controlled by the British through repressive laws and colonial power. Unfortunately, after Malaysia gained independence, the newspapers still exhibited bias, now shifting from the British to the local government. These newspapers now serve as institutional protection for the Malaysian government (Mohd Sani, *ibid*). Specifically, in today's society, the daily newspapers in Malaysia are controlled and ruled by the Barisan Nasional (BN), the largest party in the Parliament of Malaysia. In fact, some studies have shown that the BN is often presented positively in the newspapers in comparison to opposition parties, particularly during Malaysia general election campaigns (see Anuar, 2007). In this case, Taman et al. (2012: 78) claimed that 'government intervention and political party ownership of Malaysian mass media have limited the concept of free, fair and fearless journalism'. Therefore, an in-depth investigation into the government's restrictions on press freedom would be interesting from a discourse and sociolinguistics standpoint.

British newspapers

Generally, there are three distinct types of UK newspapers (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014: 120). Firstly, quality newspapers take a serious approach to political issues with little or no attention to celebrity gossip. Their readers are mainly professional and

management groups. Unlike the quality newspapers, the second type of newspapers, red-top tabloids, mainly cover sex scandals and celebrity gossip. The coverage of political stories is limited. Their readerships consist mostly of the working class. Thirdly, mid-market newspapers are a combination of the first and second types of newspapers. This type has more of a mixture of politics, social affairs as well as celebrity stories. Hence, they have a larger range of readers, from professionals to public sector workers (Esser & Strömbäck, *ibid*). When looked at in greater detail, the British newspapers can be further classified into several groups in terms of coverage (nationals versus regionals), publication (daily versus Sunday editions), and style (broadsheet versus tabloid) (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008: 8).

Another important distinction among British newspapers is related to political affiliation (Baker et al., 2013: 8). The newspapers sometimes declare allegiance to particular political parties, which is considered as a way of being to the 'left' or 'right' of the political spectrum. According to Baker et al. (2013), newspapers that are loyal to the Labour party are regarded as 'left-leaning', whilst those that favour the Conservative party are regarded as 'right-leaning'. Interestingly, newspapers usually express their political standpoints explicitly and actively attempt to influence their readers (Baker et al., *ibid*: 13). In the present study, the different political standpoints among UK newspapers are taken into account when selecting the target newspapers. The reason for this is to obtain broader news coverage of the examples of distant suffering from two different political standpoints. However, given the nature of the present study, which focuses on a comparison of Malaysian and UK newspapers, the political positions of the British newspapers are explored in detail in the analysis.

1.5 Theoretical framework used in this study

This is a multidisciplinary study combining corpus-based discourse analysis and an attitudes study, focusing on keywords. According to Bondi (2010: 3), keyword analysis has become important in corpus studies due to the development of methods for the analysis of words meanings in context. A keyword list is usually presented in order of *keyness* (the statistically 'strongest' keywords in a corpus when compared to a general corpus) (Baker, 2004: 347). According to Baker & Ellece (2011: 66), *keyness* helps to identify which semantic codes are statistically more frequent in a given context when compared to others, and suggests the importance and quality of words in a corpus which reflect the main ideas of the context. In other words, keyword analysis is used to determine which linguistic items are overrepresented in the target

corpus in comparison to the reference corpus (McIntyre, 2012) and also to provide indications of 'aboutness' (what the text is about) and stylistic factors (Scott, 2010: 43) in the texts. The present study adopts the Scott & Tribble's (2006: 55) definition of keyness as 'a quality words may have in a given text or set of texts (when compared to a general corpus), suggesting that they are important, they reflect what the text is really about, avoiding trivia and insignificant detail'.

In attitudes research, keywords techniques can be used to obtain immediate spontaneous emotional and cognitive responses from respondents (Garrett et al. 2005: 37). The technique is used to elicit automatic associations which the respondents make with the 'attitude object' (e.g. language or social meanings). The open-ended nature of this form of technique enables what is most important to the respondents to become more visible (Evans & Imai, 2011: 318). As stated by Garrett et al. (2003), keyword techniques encourage respondents to provide the concepts that are most salient to them. In the present study, a rather straightforward definition of 'salience' is applied which is taken from Kerswill, & Williams (2002: 86) as high-frequency items. Hence, keywords or topics with greater frequency in comparison to others are considered salient in the study.

Keyword analysis has been shown to be a productive approach to the study of media texts (e.g. Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Baker 2012) as well as the study of language attitudes (e.g. Evans & Imai, 2011; Garrett et al., 2006). In the present study, its usefulness is further explored and evaluated by applying the method in a multidisciplinary study combining studies of media discourse and the attitudes of media audiences. In this study, keyword analysis not only helps to reveal the types of discourse found within media texts, but it also directs the researcher to lexical differences between Malaysian and British newspaper stories. Moreover, it allows the identification of the audiences' attitudes pertaining to suffering based on their word choices. Crucially, this technique can be considered in the context of other ways of investigating the effect of news media on audiences' through a comparison of keywords.

1.6 Statement of the problem

From the disappearance of flight MH370 to the shooting down of flight MH17, our everyday understandings of local and distant events largely refer to experiences of human suffering and misfortune. The media brings this experience close to us by

presenting images and stories relating to the suffering. As stated by Conboy (2013: 12), news in particular contributes enormously to our understanding of what happens beyond our own experience. Therefore, Sood et al. (1987) and Gaddy and Tanjong, (1986) believe that the media has the power to shape public opinion about the importance and effect of a disaster. It is claimed that distant suffering is constructed differently across countries with a classification between 'us' and 'others': indicating a power division between danger and safety, peace and war, prosperity and poverty (Chouliaraki, 2011: 608). Indeed, the ways in which the news media represent the suffering of 'others' have been elaborated in a number of studies (e.g. Ashlin and Ladle 2007; Joye, 2010; Chouliaraki, 2011).

However, one of the problems constraining research on suffering is that it is usually studied from one perspective, either as distant suffering or local suffering. There is lack of information concerning how the same suffering is constructed locally as well as internationally. In addition, previous studies were mostly conducted in the areas of health science, psychology, sociology and journalism. Little attention has been given to language as the main medium of communication between audiences and newsmakers. According to Hartley (1982: 7), news media is capable of transforming an event into 'a recognisable product which we accept as familiar' through the use of language. Therefore, the huge influence of media texts in reflecting or constructing our social life, politics and culture should not be underestimated. According to Fairclough (1995b), textual analysis such as the study of vocabulary choices can help to reveal the nature of media output.

This study attempts to address these shortcomings of previous works (see Chapters 2 and 3 for more detail) by investigating how the Malaysian Airlines tragedies were linguistically constructed as local and distant suffering in Malaysian and British newspapers. In addition, this study also aims to further develop scholarly research on the effects of the media by examining the extent to which judgements in the media construction of the airline tragedies were shared and/or refuted in the views of audiences. In order to achieve these aims, the present study adopts a multi-method keyword analysis combining corpus-based discourse analysis and a study of language attitudes.

1.7 Research aims and research questions

Based on a discussion of fundamental concepts and the analytical frameworks presented above, this section formulates specific research questions. The main research aim of this thesis is to explore the combined strengths of two distinctive linguistics methods – corpus-based discourse analysis and the study of language attitudes in a contemporary analysis of Malaysian and UK media discourse. These two methods have rarely been combined and it is hoped that this thesis will demonstrate the value of doing so, generating some helpful insights into media and language analysis. In this study, the researcher uses a combination of keyword analysis informed by corpus-based discourse analysis and a keyword technique informed by language attitudes study in order to explore the presentation of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies as local and distant suffering in relation to the Malaysian and UK socio-economic and political contexts. Particular attention is paid to a social division between ‘us’ and ‘others’.

In order to achieve the aims of the study, the following research questions were developed as follows:

1. (a): How were keywords used to represent the disappearance of the Flight MH370 and what does this reveal about differences and similarities in media reporting about the flight in the two countries?
(b): How were keywords used to represent the shooting down of the Flight MH17 and what does this reveal about differences and similarities in media reporting about the flight in the two countries?
2. In what ways (if any) is the discourse of ‘Us’ versus ‘Others’ are constructed in the UK and Malaysian newspapers?
3. What are the a) Malaysian and b) UK university students’ attitudes towards the Malaysian Airlines tragedies?
4. To what extent, and, in what ways, are there a) similarities and b) differences between the construction of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies MH370 and MH17 in the Malaysian and UK newspapers and Malaysian and UK university students’ attitudes toward the tragedies?

1.8 Thesis structure

The remaining chapters of this thesis are as follows. Chapter two provides a literature review of relevant theoretical areas of concern for this study. The discussion includes critical discourse analysis and Fairclough's three-dimensional model. It is made clear that this analytical tool has limitations that are remedied by the integration of corpus linguistics and language attitudes study. An outline of corpus linguistics as well as keywords analysis is also provided. Moreover, approaches to the study of attitudes in discourse and Garrett's keyword technique are covered. Finally, the researcher discusses the suitability of the multi-method keyword analysis for a multi-disciplinary study.

Chapter three gives a detailed introduction to approaches to and empirical observations of the representation of suffering in the news media. The chapter includes background information in relation to the language of suffering, providing specific examples of words associated with types of suffering. The researcher also critically evaluates previous research in relation to the representation of local and distant suffering in the news. The literature review leads on to a discussion of the discourse of 'us' versus 'others' in the news construction of distant suffering.

Chapter four begins with an account of the specific research questions guiding the keyword analysis. The discussion is followed by a description of the theoretical framework and how it is used to approach the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. The analysis is divided into two parts; firstly the newspaper analysis and secondly the attitudes study. In the case of the newspaper analysis, criteria for selecting the newspapers and corpus building are addressed. In terms of the attitudes study, the researcher details and justifies the selection of participants and the choice of specific research instruments. Moreover, the results of pilot tests in conjunction with the lessons learned from these tests are also covered in this chapter.

Given that the study considers two different air tragedies, the analysis of the coverage of each in the newspapers is presented in two different sections to avoid confusion. Section 5.4 offers the results and preliminary discussion for the MH370 tragedy, whilst section 5.5 focuses on the tragedy of MH17. In chapter six, the analysis of the university students' attitudes towards the air tragedies is detailed. As in chapter five, the discussion of the results is separated into two sections concerning MH370 and MH17.

Finally, chapter seven provides a wider discussion and lists the conclusions of the study. The researcher draws together the findings of the analyses in chapters five and six. The chapter begins with a more in-depth debate of the findings of the study in terms of the research questions. Subsequently, the chapter concludes with a number of reflections on the research study, critically evaluating the methods employed and assessing the extent to which they provided new insights into existing theory and previous relevant research. The chapter ends by pointing out the limitations of the work and making suggestions for future work in the multidisciplinary study of suffering in a media and public context.

Notes:

1. Accident archives. *Bureau of Aircraft Accidents Archives*. (2018, March 20). Retrieved from http://www.baaa-acro.com/crash-archives?created=2014-01-01&created_1=2014-12-31&field_crash_region_target_id=All&field_crash_country_target_id=&field_crash_registration_target_id=&field_crash_aircraft_target_id=&field_crash_operator_target_id=&field_crash_cause_target_id=All&field_crash_zone_target_id=&field_crash_site_type_target_id=All&field_crash_phase_type_target_id=All&field_crash_flight_type_target_id=All&field_crash_survivors_value=All&field_crash_city_target_id=
2. Air Transport Action Group. *The economic & social benefits of air transport* [Brochure]. Geneva: Switzerland (2017, February 20). Retrieved from https://www.icao.int/Meetings/wrdss2011/Documents/JointWorkshop2005/ATAG_SocialBenefitsAirTransport.pdf
3. Malaysia Airlines to lose 6,000 staff following the MH370 and MH17 disasters in first move by new CEO dubbed 'The Terminator' who says firm is 'technically bankrupt'. *Mail Online*. (2017, February 20). Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3105499/Struggling-Malaysia-Airlines-forced-lose-6-000-staff-following-MH370-MH17-disasters-new-CEO-dubbed-Terminator.html>
4. Air disasters timeline. *BBC News*. (2017, February 20). Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-10785301>
5. MH17 Ukraine plane crash: What we know. *BBC News*. (2017, February 20). Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28357880>

Chapter Two: A multidisciplinary study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a detailed discussion of multidisciplinary study, combining corpus-based discourse analysis and an attitudes study. The discussions in this chapter are divided into three sections relating to critical discourse analysis (CDA), corpus linguistics and attitudes study. The chapter starts by exploring the definition of, approaches to and issues with CDA. General critiques of CDA as an approach to research are also discussed to improve the framework of the analysis. Having acknowledged the limitations of CDA, the researcher provides an overview of the ways in which corpus-based analysis can aid CDA. More specifically, the benefits of this combination are discussed.

Even though this study focuses primarily on corpus-based discourse analysis, it is necessary for the attitudes study to be included in order to yield shared findings from the analyses of news frames and audience responses. In this section, the researcher provides a theoretical foundation for the attitudes study, including discussion of the keywords technique and the measurements that inform the present research. Essentially, the extent to which the attitudes study can be effectively used in conjunction with corpus-based discourse analysis is also explained. In this case, the researcher discusses how the process of keyword analysis was able to recognise the salience categories of representation of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies in newspapers as well as to reflect the important attitudes of the audiences towards the suffering.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): An introduction

This section explores the approaches used in analysing media discourse, specifically critical discourse analysis (CDA), in a media context. It covers some historical aspects of CDA as well as the definition of 'discourse'. The significant notions and major theoretical principles of CDA are also covered in this section. The discussion then points to the framework used in the present study – Fairclough's three-dimensional model. Crucially, general critiques of CDA as an approach to research are also discussed, pointing to the integration of CDA and corpus linguistics.

2.2.1 Definition and the concept of discourse analysis

We are literally surrounded by discourse in our daily life through the words we speak, write, read and hear (Jones, 2012: 26). According to Fairclough (1995b: 56), discourse refers to the 'language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view'. Hence, different discourses reflect different perspectives on the world (Fairclough, 2003: 124). In line with Fairclough's definition, Jorgensen & Phillips (2011: 1) claimed that discourse is 'a particular way of talking about and understanding the world or an aspect of the world'. Functionally, discourse is used (simultaneously) to represent as well as to legitimate or delegitimise social actions (Hart & Cap, 2014: 1). In this way, discourse is shaped by social practices and structures which surround it. At the same time, it is also shaping the social status quo, as it constitutes the social practices and structures. Since, there is a close relationship between discourse and social context, Woods (2006: x) defined discourse as simply language plus context. More specifically, Woods' definition refers to the use of language in a context, which associated with our experience, assumptions, expectations, social and personal identities, and social relationships with others. Therefore, Baker (2006: 4) asserted that discourses are constantly changing, interacting with each other, breaking off and merging.

Generally, discourse analysis refers to a research approach in which language materials such as written or spoken texts are examined as evidence of phenomena 'beyond the individual person' (Taylor, 2013: 1). This statement can be explained in such a way that a letter written by a person not only reflects the writer's background, feeling or opinions but it also provide evidence of the society such as values and cultural at the time of writing. For many linguists, 'discourse' refers to anything beyond the sentence or in more general it is the study of language use (Schiffrin et al., 2003: 1; Jones, 2012: 2-3). Jones claimed that the ways of looking at language are based on four assumptions: (1) language is ambiguous, (2) language is always in the world, (3) the use of language and one's identity are interconnected (4) language is never used all by itself.

First, Jones (ibid) explained that language is ambiguous, as the process of language production and interpretation are never clear. The same message may be interpreted differently to different people. In fact, the speakers may not express themselves directly, they may not say what they mean or mean what they say. Second, language in the world refers to the process of understanding what people mean by making

reference to the social context. Therefore, making sense of language is always a matter of who is saying, where and when it is said, and to whom it is said. Third, language and social identity are inseparable. Jones argued that people demonstrate their identity in terms of gender, ethnicity, nationality and social status through the ways they speak or write. Finally, Jones sees language as a combination with other modes such as tone of voice, facial expression and gestures to achieve a communication purpose for instance, argument, narration, description, and exposition.

With respect to critical discourse analysis (CDA), Fairclough (1995a) defined CDA as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse. According to Jorgensen & Phillips (2011: 60), CDA is 'critical' in the sense that it aims to reveal the role of discursive practice in the production and reproduction of social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power. Indeed, CDA is a critical approach to discourse analysis which helps to reveal some of the hidden and 'often out of sight' values, positions and perspectives (Paltridge, 2012: 186). CDA provides theories and methods for the empirical study of relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011:60) and hence, it has been widely applied in a variety of research such as mass communication, racism, nationalism and identity (e.g. Baker, 2012; Wodak et al., 1999), mass communication, democracy and politics (e.g. Mayr, 2008; Fairclough, 1995a, 1995b, 2000), feminist analysis (e.g. Lazar 2007, 2005), and language teaching (e.g. Byram et al. 2002).

According to Holmes & Meyerhof (2003), CDA has been shaped and developed by many linguists, the most prominent of whom are Norman Fairclough (1989), Teun van Dijk (2003) and Ruth Wodak (1989). During the 1980s and 1990s, Fairclough elaborated a range of language studies through sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cognitive psychology, conversation analysis and discourse analysis (Henderson, 2005). However, he criticised much of the research in these areas as lacking a critical perspective. Therefore, Fairclough proposed CDA by making the link between critical linguistics, discourse analysis and social politics through the study of the relevant discourse and language. As mentioned by van Dijk (2003), CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that is concerned with the way in which the abuse of social power happens, how dominant groups assume power and how inequality is practised and reproduced through the use of language in a social and political context. In brief, CDA is an approach which deals with several dimensions of the relationships between language, power and ideology.

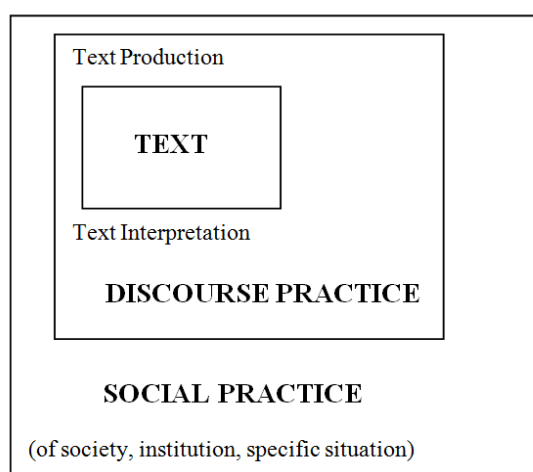
The view of language as social behaviour is emphasised in CDA, which sees discourse (the use of language) as a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1995a). The notion of discourse as a social practice is remarkably useful for the present study, as it implies a two-way relationship between a discursive event and the situation, organisation and social structure in which it occurs. Combining the two above discussions, one can see that discourse is tied in with our social identities. Apparently, CDA could help us to understand the purposes behind an interaction and how power is exerted when we influence one another through communication. Fairclough (2003: 124) argued that discourse constitutes the resources people deploy in relating to one another, keeping separate from one another, cooperating, completing and dominating one another. Hence, CDA can be applied in many different social domains, including explorations of the role of language use in broad societal and cultural developments such as globalisation and the growth of mass mediated communication (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2011:2). From a linguistic perspective, language is inseparable from its social context. Thus, discourse analytical research in this area includes investigations into how language shapes and is shaped by social practices, how language varies across contexts and how language reveals one's identity and social differences (Taylor, 2013: 2-4). As a result, Jones (2012: 4) claimed that, through CDA, we can learn to communicate more effectively by understanding people better.

This study follows Fairclough's definition of discourse as 'language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view'. It is observed that the aforementioned literature stresses the underlying social practices which make discourse possible, and therefore the analysis of language in the present study is located in an account of the ways discourses reproduce and transform the material world. This section thus concludes that CDA offers a powerful analytic tool that can be developed for use in the close reading of newspapers and other public texts. This is because it addresses contemporary societal issues, seeking to show how people are manipulated by powerful interests (Huckin, 2002: 2) through the medium of language. Likewise, Fairclough (1995a) asserted that the use of CDA is important for people to be critically aware of culture, discourse and the language of media because language is never neutral and always has some implications in the world. In addition, CDA enriches analysis by taking into account omissions, presuppositions, ambiguities and other overt but powerful aspects of discourse. In the present study, Fairclough's prominent three dimensional CDA model is adopted to aid the keyword analysis, semantic categorisation and collocation analysis, and also to explore discursive strategies in terms of intensification or mitigation in news reports.

2.2.2 Fairclough's three dimensional model

The domain of discourse event has three dimensions: texts (spoken or written), discourse practise and social practise (Fairclough, 1992). These three elements are interconnected and are complementary ways in reading and analysing texts. The relationship between the elements in Fairclough three-dimensional model is reproduced in the Figure 2.1 below:

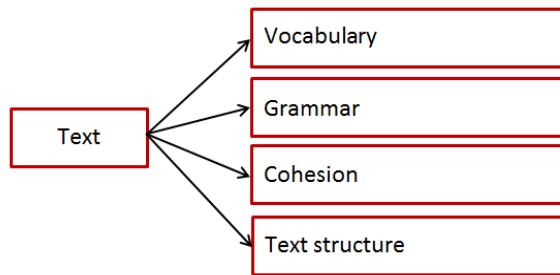
Figure 2.1: Fairclough's three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis (1992: 73).



1) Text

Text analysis is the first level in the three-dimensional model and it refers to written or spoken language (Fairclough, 1992). According to Fairclough (1992: 75), "text analysis can be organised under four main headings: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure" (see Figure 2.2). Vocabulary deals mainly with individual words, words meaning and metaphor, while grammar is concerned with words combined into clauses and sentences. Cohesion focuses on the way clauses and sentences are linked together and finally, text structure deals with large scale organisation properties of the texts. In CDA, text can also be examined 'in terms of what is present and what could have been but not present' (Richardson, 2007: 38). In addition, textual analysis can be conducted by looking at the patterns of co-occurrence of words in texts, collocations and the frequencies of words used (Fairclough, 2003: 131).

Figure 2.2: Textual analysis (adopted from: Fairclough, 1992: 75)

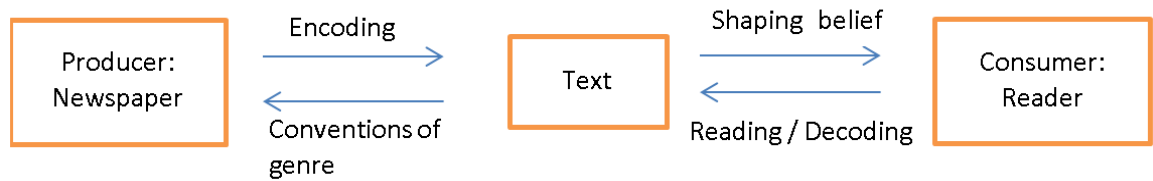


When analysing a written text, there are three aspects to be taken into consideration: the types of representations and recontextualisations of social practice; the particular constructions of writer and reader identities (e.g. the status or role that are being emphasised); and a particular construction of the relationship between writer and reader (e.g. formal or informal; cohesion and coherence) (Fairclough, 1995: 58). Similarly, van Dijk (2009) asserted that textual analysis should be examined at various levels including choice of topics, lexical choice, metaphors, syntactic structure, politeness, direct or indirect discriminatory interaction as well as power or empowerment elements. van Dijk believed that looking at text from multilevel would enhance and provide a more fruitful result. In a similar vein, Richardson (2007: 38) claimed that every aspect of textual content is a matter of choice – the choice to represent an event, a person or to include a particular fact or opinion. In other words, language users choose words that represent and construct their knowledge, status and social identity (Fairclough, 1992). In this respect, Fairclough's framework explores not only the text itself but also its production and interpretation within a social context (Simpson & Mayr, 2010: 53).

II) Discourse Practice

In relation to discourse practice, Fairclough focused on the process of production, distribution, and consumption, referring to those who wrote the text, in what condition, why it was written, how it was distributed and to whom the text is aimed (Pahta et al., 2010). Fairclough (1992) explained that texts always involve a producer who produced the texts, medium in which it is published and consumer who consumed the texts. Likewise, Ndaluka (2012: 47) indicated that the producers make use of words from other sources or texts and then justify their own words in their social setting. Subsequently, the consumers interpret the texts according to their conceptions and understandings of the world. The relationship between production, distribution and consumption is presented in Figure 2.3:

Figure 2.3: Discourse Practice (Richardson, 2007:39)



In figure 2.3, Richardson described each point of discursive presentation (between the producer and text; between the text and consumer) has a two-way relationship. For instance, the producer encodes meaning into the text through the selection of words and story. At the same time, the text could influence the way information are collected and presented by the producer to the reader, through setting, plot and theme of the story. The two-way relationship between text and consumer can be explained in such a way that the text is delivering to the readers with the purpose to share their perspective to certain events or people. However, reader do not merely accept the message of the text, but they interpret it accordingly based on different backgrounds, knowledge and culture (Condit, 1989; Fairclough, 2002; Wodak & Ludwig, 1999). Often readers assess the meaning of a text based on judgements made in relation to the producer, such as the establishment or media organisation or company and the reputation of the editor (Richardson, 2007:41).

In this dimension, Fairclough (1995a: 61) paid particular attention to intertextual analysis. In the analytical framework, intertextual analysis is situated on the borderline between text and discourse practice. According to Wang (2006: 73), an analysis of intertextuality offers insight into texts by examining their interaction with prior texts, writers, readers and conventions. Specifically, intertextual analysis reveals the types of genres and discourse practices used in the text and also to trace whether these elements exist in the text. Unlike textual analysis, intertextual analysis is more interpretative. Using evidence from textual analysis, intertextual analysis is able to locate the position of the text in pertaining to social repertoires of discourse practices such as discriminatory discourse in the representation of immigrants and refugees (see KhosraviNik, 2009). In brief, intertextual analysis offers a bridge between the sociocultural context and the text (Fairclough, 1995a: 61| Wang, 2006: 77).

III) Social Practice

Evidence accumulated from the first and second dimensions of textual and discourse analysis is subject to critical analysis in the third dimension (Richardson, 2007: 42). The analysis of social practice in a communicative event involves several layers.

These include the immediate situational context, a wider context of institutional practices within which the event is embedded, and a wider frame of society and culture (Fairclough, 1995a: 62). Analysis of all of the layers aims to assist in the understanding of a particular event in a social practice; for instance, ethical and political critique, exposing abuses of power, and assessing inequality among nations or gender issues can be carried out through the exploration of media text. The relationship between discourse and society is represented in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Social Practice (Richardson, 2007: 42).

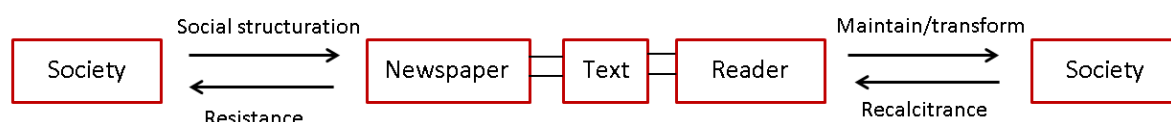


Figure 2.4 suggests that each point of discursive presentation between society and discourse or vice versa has a dialectical relationship. For instance, a society which is formed in terms of historical, economic, political and ideological features simultaneously forms the background for journalism (Richardson, *ibid*: 43). According to Coward & Ellis (1977: 63), in a social formation, economic practice forms the material means of living while political practice creates the forms of social groups (e.g. involving dominance and subordination), and finally ideological practice produces positions which help subject to perform within the social entity.

Social practice is considered to be associated with the frame of ideologies, hegemonies and hierarchies that have been practised in the society. As stated by Fairclough (1992), social practices are the phenomena, things, and events people have accepted and learned from culture, religion, the environment, and the society they live in. More specifically, 'social practice is something people actively produce and make sense of on the basis of shared common sense procedures' (Fairclough, 1992: 72). Practices around the production and consumption of media texts can also be identified as social practices. In its social practice, Fairclough (1995b) claimed that media output is controlled by professional and institutional factors. In terms of social practice, Fairclough addressed privilege as belonging to those who hold economic, political or cultural power, which includes the privilege to interfere in and control the media. This suggests that the newspaper represents a mind-set and ideology of people with privileged backgrounds. In fact, the media are often found to

be 'reproducing social relations of domination and exploitation' (Fairclough, 1995b: 44).

Therefore, it can be argued that media text cannot be studied without looking at the relevant social practice (Luke, 2002: 102). As shown in Figure 2.4, text, discourse and social practice are interconnected. It is inappropriate to look at one dimension without examining the other two dimensions in media discourse. Through the analysis of formal features such as texts and their interaction with ideologies as well as power relations, the present study could shed light on the impact of language and communication in society through the influence of the media. Fairclough's three-dimensional model has been broadly employed to describe the relationship between language use and society, particularly in the area of media studies (e.g. Joye 2010; Wang & Liu, 2015). Even though Fairclough's framework is useful for empirical study of relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains, in most cases it is employed and integrated with other models or theories, such as corpus linguistics (e.g. Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008) or Chouliaraki's theory (e.g. Joye, 2010), for more fruitful results.

2.2.3 Critiques of CDA

Despite the apparent usefulness of CDA, like any other methods it has limitations. CDA has been criticised for methodological weaknesses such as the random selection of texts, the analysis of small samples and a lack of academic consistency (e.g. Orpin, 2005; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). Carreon & Todd (2011) highlighted three major limitations of CDA. Firstly, they argued that data selection could involve strong ideological features such as bias and discrimination. Secondly, researchers are deemed to employ their own favoured methods in the analysis and there is lack of pilot-testing for their output against a sample of the data. Likewise, Widdowson (1995: 169) stated that CDA can give biased interpretations prejudiced on the basis of certain ideological commitments and that texts may be selected based on the preferred interpretation. Therefore, some view it as a methodology of 'finding whatever one wants to find' (Carreon & Todd, 2011).

According to Breeze (2011: 512), questions of the effects of the text on the reader or audience are rarely raised in CDA research. There is lack of cogent theory concerning audience effects and responses in CDA that would provide support for its statements about the impact of discourse on society. Breeze suggested that reader responses or

reception are generally naively assumed on the basis of the analyst's interpretation of the text. For instance, Stubbs (1997) criticised Fairclough's work in relation to formality in public language in 1995. Stubbs argued that Fairclough's analysis shows no quantitative diachronic evidence which suggests that the degree of informality is growing. The results are merely based on Fairclough's own interpretation. Therefore, CDA methods may not be sufficient to justify the results that are supposedly obtained.

A number of scholars such as Toolan (2002), Stubbs (1997), Gabrielatos and Baker (2008), and Breeze (2011) have made similar criticisms of CDA. In order to enhance the outcome of CDA analysis, Toolan (1997) stressed the need for further clarification, particularly of descriptive and interpretative explanation. In a similar vein, Breeze (2011) asserted that, in order to avoid using 'impressionistic' methodology in textual analysis, attention should be given to the same standards of rigour when handling language data as in any other area of linguistics. In this case, Breeze proposed to use the techniques of corpus linguistics to obtain a more representative overview across a broader sample of language. Likewise, Gabrielatos & Baker (2008) agreed that corpus-based approaches are able to address criticisms of CDA methodology in relation to textual analysis. In particular, corpus linguistics could enhance CDA through the collection of large amounts of text (Stubbs, 1997). It is believed that studies involving quantification could increase the degree of confidence in CDA findings (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008).

In terms of methodological flaws in understanding the ways texts work in social contexts, Breeze (2011) recommended that more attention should be paid to the reader's response to or the audience's reception of the text. Breeze (2011) claimed that CDA could provide deeper insights by exploring real responses from actual audiences. The contrasting of conclusions from the audience may lead to the development of new theory or concepts in media studies (Breeze, *ibid*). Therefore, it is pertinent to include audience feedback and perceptions in CDA analysis to explore the extent to which ideas are shared or refuted amongst the media, researchers and audiences.

In response to the weaknesses discussed above, the present study attempts to apply a multidisciplinary method through the integration of CDA, corpus linguistics and an attitudes study. CDA is used to explore the relationship between language, power and ideology. Indeed, it is used to investigate how the language employed in the media contributes to establishing and maintaining social relations of domination in

terms of the construction of news of the airline tragedies. Corpus linguistics is important in providing access to a larger sample of news articles. Essentially, it facilitates comparisons and offers data on salient linguistic features in texts via the analysis of keywords and collocation. The attitudes study is used to determine the audience's responses or readers' perspectives on the airline tragedies. The combination of corpus-based discourse analysis and the attitudes study could provide new insights into the analysis of media discourse, particularly in the context of disaster or tragic events.

2.3 Corpus linguistics

This section gives an overview of corpus linguistics. It starts by exploring the definition of and issues associated with corpus linguistics. It is important to understand the concepts used in corpus linguistics before moving to key elements such as keyword and collocation analysis. The main issues of corpus linguistics such as representativeness, authenticity and sampling are explained in this chapter. Having acknowledged these issues, the researcher justifies the choice of and approaches to corpus linguistics adopted in the present study. It is crucial to clarify that the study focuses primarily on keywords data derived from a corpus-based analysis. As stated by Stubbs (2001: 215), the frequent occurrence of particular words in a text show that specific evaluative meanings are not merely personal but widely shared in a discourse community.

2.3.1 Definitions and issues

Traditionally, a corpus refers to a collection of naturally-occurring language texts which may be in spoken, written or intermediate forms that are chosen to characterise a state of or variety in the use of a language (Sinclair, 1991: 171). Francis (1992: 17) defined a corpus as a collection of texts assumed to represent a given language, dialect or other subset of a language to be used for linguistics purposes. Due to the development of modern technology, the means of collecting the language text are becoming more and more sophisticated through the use of computer programmes. As stated by McCarthy & O'Keeffe (2010: 5), when computer can be used in the context of a corpus, the processes involved in searching for data, analysing language and writing dictionaries are all well established. In modern linguistics, a corpus can be defined as 'a collection of sampled texts, written or spoken, in machine-readable form which may be annotated with various forms of linguistics information' (McEnery et al., 2006: 4); and/or 'a computerised collection of authentic texts, amenable to

automatic or semi-automatic processing or analysis' (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001: 55). This implies that, nowadays, most analyses of corpora are computer-processed and more readily associated with the use of computer software (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2010: 3).

To avoid potential confusion between corpora, text archives and databases, Baker (2006: 26) asserted that corpora are different from other types of sources. More specifically, a corpus is designed for a specific 'representative' function (Leech, 1991: 11) while archives or databases are massive sources of text which are normally not structured (Kennedy, 1998: 4). Aston & Burnard (1998: 4) sees a corpus as a framework for the purposes of linguistic analysis rather than being an object defined by accidents of authorship or history. McEnery et al. (2006: 5) summarised the definition of the corpus in four main notions. A corpus is a collection of (1) machine-readable, (2) authentic texts (spoken and/or written) which is (3) sampled to be (4) representative of a particular language or language variety.

The first notion of machine readability is closely associated with modern corpora. With the help of technology, the speed of data search, selection, sorting and formatting processes in corpus studies has been improved (McEnery et al., *ibid*). Likewise, McCarthy & O'Keeffe (2010: 6) claimed that various communicative modes such as news articles, speech and interview transcriptions can all be linked by the use of simple technologies and all can be made accessible at once. Crucially, a range of statistical results in relation to keyword and collocation analysis can be generated via computer software such as WordSmith and Sketch Engine to enrich various linguistics analyses. The second notion of authenticity refers to unedited or non-manipulated data which are relatively spontaneous (Renouf & Kehoe, 2009: 51). 'Authentic language' can also be defined as language that has been attested to and is attestable as 'real' language stored in a corpus (Lüdeling, 2009: 1045). Nevertheless, the notion of authenticity as naturally occurring language is in itself problematic (*ibid*). Renouf & Kehoe argued that both corpus linguistics and discourse linguistics have confronted the problem of authenticity because the data investigated may not be the original pieces of work that they represent, nor in the communicative situation relevant to the writers or the expected readership. However, in studies of media text, news articles have been proven to be a standard authentic dataset (Archer et al., 2012: 12) and have been widely used by prominent scholars such as Baker et al. (2008), KhosraviNik (2009), and Jaworska & Krishnamurthy (2012).

The third notion of sampling addresses an important issue in corpus design. This includes the consideration of the types and number of texts and the length of the texts sampled (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001: 59). For corpus linguists, sampling involves determining the size of the text samples which need to be included in a corpus and also what range of individuals need to be selected (Meyer, 2002: 40). The former can ensure that valid generalisations can be made about a genre, whereas the latter should provide a valid representation of the population demonstrated in the texts. With respect to the size of a sample, texts containing one to five million words have been described as small samples (McCarthy, 1998; Bondi, 2001). Aston (1997: 54) argued that small samples are more specialised in terms of topic and/or genre in comparison to large corpora.

Some examples of existing small-scale corpus studies are those conducted by Bednarek (2006, 2008), who explored the distribution of evaluative meanings in a 70,000 word corpus of hard news stories and the distribution of emotion terms in an 85,000-word corpus which consisted of news reportage, fiction, conversation, and academic discourse. In addition, Dafouz-Milne (2008) explored the role of meta-discourse in the construction and attainment of persuasion using a corpus of 40 opinion columns with a total of 46,815 words. Du Plessis (2011) also conducted a small-scale corpus study using 13,219 tokens (with a total of 420 word types) from the 2009 annual reports of organisations in the South African banking sector. There is increasing recognition of the value of smaller, more specialised corpora as they are appropriate for the examination of specific types and aspects of communication (Rutherford, 2005: 354). Indeed, smaller corpora have been used alongside larger reference corpora (Ghadessy et al., 2001) for different purposes.

According to Leech (1991: 27), a corpus is considered to be representative 'if findings based on its contents can be generalised to a larger hypothetical corpus'. In general, there are two different types of representativeness: general and specialised (Cheng, 2011: 4). A general corpus attempts to be representative of language as a whole. For instance, the British National Corpus (BNC) is a general corpus which contains a wide range of text compiled by researchers as representative of English language, whereas, a specialised corpus such as the Michigan corpus of academic spoken English (MICASE) contains only spoken language from university settings. Biber et al. (1998: 246) viewed the task of representing a language or a part of language as problematic. They argued that we do not know how far the selected data represent the full extent of the relevant context in a real-life environment. In addition, Dash (2006: 57) claimed

that a large collection of text samples may not necessarily ensure the quality of generalisation of language properties. In other words, size may be irrelevant to the quality of representativeness of text in a corpus. Therefore, it is argued that no corpus is fully representative and balanced, nor can it be claimed to constitute a truly representative coverage of language use (Atkins et al., 1992: 5; Kuebler & Zinsmeister, 2015: 10).

However, efforts have been made to minimise the effect of bias and to increase the degree of representativeness in a corpus. Schmitt (2013: 93) highlighted several issues to be considered in devising a representative sample. Firstly, it involves the consideration of different registers (e.g. fiction, non-fiction and casual conversation), discourse modes (e.g. multi-party interactive, dialogic and monologic) and topics (e.g. national news, local news). Secondly, the production context of a text is essential to the representativeness of a sample. For instance, the production of newspapers is different from that of e-mail messages. Newspapers are consumed by a larger group of audiences but are produced by relatively few people. In contrast, e-mail messages constitute a type of writing produced by many people (Schmitt, *ibid*). In this respect, Kuebler & Zinsmeister (2015: 10-11) argued that every corpus is representative for its language or variety to a certain extent. For example, corpora that are collected opportunistically using appropriate data sources such as newspaper text could represent the English language as a whole. An excellent example is revealed in Tan's (2006) study in which she compiled and built the MEN corpus to represent Malaysian newspaper articles published between 1 August 2001 and 30 January 2002.

This section has highlighted and discussed definitions of and issues with corpora. Having recognized the importance of authenticity in constructing a corpus, the researcher decided to compile her own, selecting news texts from selected Malaysian and UK newspapers. The specialised corpus is relatively small in size but it seems reasonable in representing the news constructions of the air crises as uncommon events. In considering the issues of the representativeness of the corpus in the current study, the strategy highlighted by Schmitt (2013) are acknowledged in the process of compiling the corpus to reduce the degree of bias (see chapter 4 for more details).

2.3.2 Critiques of corpus linguistics

While the corpus-based approach has been used in many branches of linguistics (such as in metaphor and conversation analysis, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis), the use of corpora has also become the target of a number of criticisms. For instance, corpus-based approaches are too broad and do not facilitate close readings of texts (Baker, 2006: 7); the representativeness of the corpus is problematic as it is almost impossible for a corpus to include all sentences of a language (Xiao, 2009: 991); and, crucially, corpus-based approaches cannot explain the findings in corpora. A related criticism was made by Gabrielatos & Baker (2008) who argued that corpus linguistics provide useful statistical figures about a word's frequency but the subtleties of language are overlooked. Likewise, Hunston (2000: 112) claimed that a corpus offers information on the frequency of word usage rather than its possibility of occurrence. The social, evocative and historical aspects related to language are, furthermore, missing in corpus linguistics (Dash, 2005; Ädel, 2010: 48) and the influence of power and hegemony in text production are not addressed.

However, while the lack of social context is a drawback in corpus-based approaches, this should not cause researchers to abandon the method (Ädel, 2010: 48). As Baker (2006:7) implied, such criticisms are worth bearing in mind and should not prevent researchers from using this approach. Rather, Baker claimed that the criticism should encourage corpus-based work which takes into account the potential problems by supplementing the approach with other methodologies. A similar recommendation was made by Xiao (2009: 992), claiming that explanations of corpus findings must be developed using other methodologies and evidence from other sources.

According to Flowerdew (2008: 19), CDA could help to enhance the field of corpus linguistics, especially with regard to contextual issues and the interpretation of the data (2008: 19). In order to make sense of frequencies and to understand the meanings behind repetition and lexical choice, the analyst's knowledge and perspective from social context are crucial in the interpretation of the evidence (Post, 2008: 4). Indeed, an interpretative approach is needed to discuss why certain words occur statistically more often than others. In this case, CDA plays an important role in addressing social aspects in relation to language, as it helps to interpret texts by looking at the word meanings and patterns which may then lead to the identification of discursive strategies in texts. Therefore, it can be argued that both approaches yield valuable shared findings, each compensating for the methodological

deficiencies of the other or providing research findings that the other could not (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008: 8).

2.3.3 The integration of Corpus linguistics and Discourse Analysis

According to McEnery et al. (2006: 8), corpus linguistics is 'a methodology with a wide range of applications across areas and theories of linguistics'. Indeed, corpus linguistics has been used in the pursuit of broader research in areas such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, teaching and learning, literacy stylistics and many more (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2010: 7). As mentioned in section 2.2.4, the use of corpus linguistics (CL) can help to exploit the strong points in discourse analysis (DA) and to eliminate its potential problems. Generally, these two disciplines are distinct in the sense that discourse analysis is mainly qualitative, whereas corpus linguistics is essentially quantitative. Moreover, DA focuses on the integrity of text, while CL favours representative samples; the data used in DA are usually not widely available but are made available in CL; keywords in DA are words that have particular significance in a given discourse, but in CL keywords are words whose frequencies are statistically significant when compared to a larger reference corpus (Leech, 2000: 678-680; McEnery et al., 2006: 111). In discourse analysis, CL has been adopted as a means of looking at language patterns such as the occurrence of keywords and collocates over a large dataset (McEnery et al., 2006: 9).

In regard to the integration of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, McEnery & Wilson (2010: 114) highlighted two important points. Firstly, the two disciplines have a strong and historical methodological connection, as the application of computer tools in the field of discourse analysis has been common since the 1970s. Some early works were conducted by Pecheux, whose approach to discourse was strongly framed by Marxist theory (Threadgold, 2003). Pecheux's methodology involves transforming the sentences from a corpus into a set of simpler structures and also examining the repeated patterns of words (McEnery & Wilson, 2010: 114). Secondly, standard corpora which contain a wide range of genres and text types have the potential to be used as control data in discourse analysis. According to McEnery & Hardie (2011: 133-134), since critical discourse analysis (CDA) looks at texts in a very broad sense, its goals are usually approached via a close analysis of a wide range of texts. In recent years, interest in the application of collocation analysis and examining lines of concordance to aid discourse analysis has also increased (Hardt-Mautner,

1995). This methodology reveals the strong traditional bond between corpus linguistics and discourse analysis in the study of language.

In addition, discourse analysis alone cannot be taken to represent people's beliefs, opinions, or more specifically the inner aspects of their identity such as personality or attitudes (Baker, 2006: 3-4). This is due to the fact that different people may see or interpret a text differently and from different points of view. In this respect, keyword and collocation analysis from corpus linguistics which identifies the use of certain lexical patterns from the texts could be a good start in aiding the textual analysis in CDA. As stated by Post (2008), corpus linguistics works well for the description of collocation and keywords analysis within a text, while CDA has the potential to give perceptive insights into the methodology used to construct ideology across texts. Through a corpus linguistics methodology, a list of words which fulfil certain statistical criteria will be presented to the researcher (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008: 7). These lists of words enable the researcher to approach the selected texts free from any preconceived views regarding the linguistic content.

In addition, keyword analysis helps to reveal certain ways of presenting the information (Qian & Tian, 2014) and suggests discursive strategies adopted in creating the texts. Nevertheless, keyword analysis can reveal statistically more frequent terms in different newspaper types and text types within or across newspapers (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008), and point to the need for further examination of language as a social practice. In the present study, the corpus-based discourse analysis is expanded by adding in an attitudes study. The reason for conducting the attitudes study is to identify public responses towards the air crises (see section 2.5 for details).

2.4 The study of attitudes

In this section, several key elements of the study of attitudes are discussed, including the concept of attitude, attitudes in discourse, keyword techniques in the study of attitudes and empirical studies. This section helps to develop a theoretical model for the study of attitudes and responses among the participants concerning the air crises.

2.4.1 The concept of attitudes

According to Garrett (2010: 1), attitudes exist in our daily life and we are not always conscious of them. Many of these attitudes are overt and articulated explicitly, often argumentatively, in the public sphere such as in our daily conversations or the media (Garrett, *ibid*). Attitudes have received attention for many decades and have been a central concept in social psychology (Schwarz & Bohner, 2001: 436). However, it is not easy to define the term attitude. As stated by Romaine (1995: 319), it is difficult to explain the concept of attitude as there may be discrepancies between people's thoughts and their actual behaviour. In fact, the understanding of attitudes has changed over the years due to different evaluations and emphases (Schwarz & Bohner, 2001).

As a starting point, an attitude can be defined as a 'cognitive state of readiness organised through experience and exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon one's response to all objects and situations with which it is related' (Allport, 1935: 810). Many decades later, Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) defined attitudes as 'a person's evaluation of any psychological object'. It is observed that the former definition focuses more on basic mental processes and a close relationship to the behaviour of individuals, whereas the latter emphasised a multi-component approach including such elements as affection, cognition and behaviour. Meanwhile Sarnoff (1970: 279) defined attitudes simply as natural responses favourably or unfavourably to classes of objects, and similarly Bem (1970: 14) saw attitudes as acts of liking and disliking.

Various definitions have been proposed to define the term attitude. Generally, definitions and studies of attitudes have been based on three theoretical approaches: cognitive, affective and behavioural. In cognitive theory, attitudes are defined as a 'mental and neutral states of readiness' which are not 'directly observable but have to be inferred from the subject's introspection' (Agheyisi & Fishman 1970: 138). In short, the cognitive component concerns thoughts and beliefs; for example, a favourable attitude to a certain language might entail efforts to preserve that language (Baker, C., 1992: 12). Attitudes are also claimed to be affective, as they involve one's feelings about certain objects, events or people such as liking or disliking (Baker, C., *ibid*). Behaviourist theory views attitudes as 'responses people make to social situations' (Fasold 1984: 147). In other words, attitudes are associated with behavioural intentions or plans of action under certain circumstances (Baker, C.,

1992: 13). For instance, a person who feels empathy to distant sufferers might donate money to help victims of major disasters.

In discourse analysis, attitudes are seen as responses which 'locate objects of thought on dimensions of judgment' (McGuire, 1985: 239). According to Potter & Wetherell (1987: 43), McGuire's definition suggests that, through interaction (e.g. speaking or acting), people are taking some ideas or objects of interest (e.g. immigrants and asylum) and giving them a position in an evaluative hierarchy (e.g. to refuse or offer sympathy). Over the last few decades, researchers or analysts of discourse have been interested in investigating and understanding how attitudes come to be manifested through discourse, and they believe that attitudes can be displayed through interaction (e.g. by talking or writing) (McKinlay & McVittie, 2009: 113). In the field of psycholinguistics, attitudes are seen as forms of social representation which influence the production and comprehension of discourse (Hart & Lukeš, 2009: 91). The production of discourse involves the transmission of texts to readers or audiences based on one's thoughts, including a background of experience and interest, whereas the comprehension of discourse relates to the construction of meaning from texts based on the reader's or audience's knowledge, attention, purpose and focus (Tierney & Mosenthal, 1982: 2). As revealed in van Dijk's (1991: 390) study on racism in the press, the same news report was found to be read, understood and remembered differently by different people based on their positive or negative attitudes towards the object.

From the perspectives of discourse analysts, there are three major problems in traditional studies of attitudes (Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 43). Firstly, the terms given in an attitude rating scale are problematic due to the possibility of different interpretations. Secondly, there may be an inconsistency in translation between the answers provided by informants and the analytic categories used. Thirdly, there is a distinction between an 'object of thought' and a position on a 'dimension of judgment'. These problems are shown in Marsh's (1976) study of the distribution of sympathetic and unsympathetic feelings towards '*coloured immigrants*'. In the study, the term '*coloured immigrants*' was used as an 'attitude object' to analyse the participants' attitudes towards immigration. However, the term itself is ambiguous and problematic. Generally, 'coloured' is dependent on unstated theories of race and biology, whereas 'immigrants' is used to separate local people from outsiders. Hence, 'coloured immigrants' contains different connotations which risk confusing informants who feel sympathy for immigrants but not Black people or vice versa (Potter & Wetherell, *ibid*).

In order to avoid the problems discussed above, Potter & Wetherell (1987) argued that the discourse analyst's approach to the study of attitudes should emphasise the context and variability of attitude expressions as well as the construction of the attitudinal object in discourse. In addition, Kalaja (1997) believed that 'true' attitudes should not be studied as a state of a mental entity, because attitudes are constructed by one's talking or writing in an argumentative context. Likewise, Hyrkstedt & Kalaja (1998: 346) asserted that attitudes are found in people's minds and they cannot be observed directly. Therefore, attitudes can only be observed in terms of expressions of external behaviour (Baker, C., 1992: 11). Given all these problems, Kalaja (1997) argued that a better framework to an attitudes study is to first take into consideration the context and construction of the attitudinal object.

The present study adopts the definition of attitudes provided by Ajzen (2005: 3), who proposed that they are favourable or unfavourable natural responses to objects, persons, institutions or events. This definition, which focuses on the natural positive or negative attitudes of an individual towards a given object or purpose, is likely to help in the design of a methodological framework for this study which concerns the attitudes of participants towards airline tragedies. Favourable or unfavourable responses would be implied through the use of positive or negative keywords provided by the participants towards the attitudinal objects 'MH370' and 'MH17'. Therefore, it seems plausible to argue that Ajzen's definition can be employed as a fundamental principle to examine and interpret attitudes among the participants towards the tragedies.

2.4.2 Keyword technique in the study of attitudes

Keyword techniques have been previously found to be of value in studies of attitudes (e.g. Garrett, et al., 2003; Garrett et al., 2006; Evans & Imai, 2011; Doiz et al., 2014; Llurda et al., 2014; Snodin & Young, 2015; Cukor-Avila, 2018; Ebner, 2018). According to Garrett et al. (2005: 37), keyword techniques have been used to obtain immediate spontaneous emotional and cognitive responses from participants. These techniques are carried out in such a way that the participants are asked to write down the first few words that appear in their mind towards the attitudinal object. The participants' prompt reactions to questions are then considered to reflect their attitudes to the attitudinal object contained in the question (Garrett et al., 2005). Based on the fact that keywords are free-response items, they provide a frame for the

participants to answer without any restrictions, allowing us to gain insights into the multi-layered nature of attitudinal judgement (Garrett et al., *ibid*).

In the study of attitudes, keyword techniques have been found to be valuable on their own as well as in conjunction with other research instruments. In Cukor-Avila's (2018) language regard study in Texas and South Korea, a keyword technique was used to aggregate the comments provided by respondents on maps (see Cukor-Avila, 2018 for more details about language regard and map surveys). In the study, similar keywords and phrases were grouped into semantic categories to determine emerging themes. Cukor-Avila argued that the keyword technique can be linked to map surveys to provide representations of the language used in different regions.

In a different vein, Ebner's (2018) utilised a keyword technique as an exploratory tool to identify key issues mentioned in the respondents' comments, rather than presenting different themes. Ebner investigated attitudes of lay people towards disputed usages (e.g. '*like*'). The respondents were asked to judge and comment on stimuli sentences containing an item of disputed usage. The comments were then analysed using AntConc, a word concordance computer software tool that helps to identify keywords. Ebner found that keyword techniques provide an interesting insight into what lay behind what people think about language changes. More specifically, the results reflected the attitudes of people towards change in language.

Garrett et al. (2006) provided a fruitful analysis of folk perceptions of globalisation mainly using a keyword technique. Their study collected data from groups of undergraduates in four countries: Australia, the UK, New Zealand and the USA. Respondents were asked to quickly write down the first five things that came to mind when they saw or heard the word 'globalisation'. Furthermore, they were encouraged to provide answers individually without discussion. Garrett et al. assumed that the keywords provided by the respondents were those that most strongly guided their interpretations. The keywords were then clustered into broader thematic categories measured in terms of percentage occurrence as a basis for comparison.

Drawing on Garrett et al.'s (2005) keywords technique, Snodin & Young (2015) were able to identify Thai students' language attitudes and preferences towards varieties of English. The keywords provided by the students allowed the researchers to determine if the students approved or disapproved, liked or disliked, and accepted or rejected the language evaluated. The results could then be used as guidelines to

provide direction for language policy making in the country. In Doiz et al.'s (2014) study, a keyword technique was adopted to obtain a university community's perceptions of the term 'international university' and its interaction with language and culture. Participants were asked to write down their first reactions when thinking of an international university in an attempt to elicit their immediate cognitive responses. Doiz et al. argued that the gathering of immediate responses with subsequent elaboration helped them to gain a better understanding of the situation in a bilingual university and the way in which internationalisation influences that university.

Overall, all the studies mentioned above have drawn the conclusion that keywords techniques allow researchers to determine whether or not the participants saw one attitudinal object as more important than another, particularly in terms of their approval or disapproval. The techniques are based on the assumption that the most frequently used keywords reveal salience, which in turn reflects the importance of judgements among the participants. As stated by Garrett et al. (2003: 195), the analysis of keywords offers deeper insights into the data and allow for better access to wider value of attitudes, emotion reactions and vivid stereotyping. Unlike the typical rating scales in studies of attitudes, keywords give a more detailed picture by revealing what value informants place upon a particular object or event, whether they are impressed by, dismissive or resentful of it, and what they associate the object or event with (Garrett et al., *ibid*). In other words, the analysis of keywords can be used as an exploratory tool to identify key issues in the comments of participants, rather than presenting topics that seem interesting to the researcher (Ebner, 2018: 218).

Several advantages of using keyword techniques in language attitudes study have been highlighted by Garrett et al. (2003). For instance, keywords offer an intriguing and simple mode of expression for evaluative discourses, including the way discourses are structured within specific groups. Seemingly, keywords can lead an individual word to its membership, as nominal, rather than simply describing personal attributes (Garrett et al., *ibid*). In summary, keywords are seen to offer more freedom to respondents to express their attitudes through an unconstrained request for word choices in contrast to rating scales in which the choices of answers have been determined by the researchers.

It should be borne in mind that keywords are free-response items, and thus keywords provided by participants are inevitably based on their social and cultural background (Garrett et al., 2005: 50). In this respect, coding and interpreting cultural values are

important in the analysis of keywords. For instance, the word '*sad*' would carry different meanings when it is provided by people of different genders, ages, religions or cultures. In this case, Garrett et al. found that the word '*sad*', which is commonly known as an unhappy feeling, meant 'inadequate' when used by teenagers. As a result, it is crucial to keep in mind the cultural influences on participants when analysing keywords. In light of Garrett et al.'s proposition, a careful analysis of the comments provided by participants in the present study is conducted taking into account the different socio-cultural backgrounds between the Malaysian and UK participants (more details of the participants are provided in section 4.4.2.1).

Any research method has drawbacks (Ahn, 2017: 37) and Garrett et al.'s (2005) keyword technique is no exception. The technique is subject to a number of potential pitfalls. Firstly, the wide range of keywords and semantic items used to express attitudes makes simple comparisons more difficult (Garrett et al., 2003). Secondly, the opinions of some participants' opinions may be overrepresented if they give more keywords than others (Evans & Imai, 2011: 318). Thirdly, it is difficult to apply quantitative measurement using keywords techniques (Ahn, 2017: 37). Finally, the data can be subject to social desirability bias, where participants may intentionally disguise their real attitudes and provide answers that they think give them more prestige (Garrett 2010; Ahn, 2017).

Based on the potential pitfalls addressed above, several important steps have been taken by the researcher to improve the use of the keyword technique in the study of attitudes. Firstly, the participants are asked to provide short answers rather than longer comments. This helps in the later process of grouping keywords into broader semantic categories for a better comparison between the two sets of data. Secondly, the participants are asked to provide three keywords as a way to prevent them from giving more than required. Thirdly, frequency counts are used to obtain quantitative measurements of keyword occurrence. This measurement is expressed in percentages and is calculated by dividing the total number of keywords appearing in a semantic category by the total number of keywords in the sample. Fourthly, in order to minimise effects of social desirability bias, the participants are assured of anonymity and confidentiality. They are informed that, although their answers might be used in reporting the research, no names will be attached to their data.

2.5 A multidisciplinary study

The now considerable body of research concerned with representations of human suffering has shown that mainstream media are key agents in disseminating contentious representations of human suffering (e.g. Thussu, 2004; Washer, 2004; Ashlin & Ladle, 2007; Pasquarè & Pozzetti, 2007; Joye, 2010). At the same time, there are a few empirical studies that focus primarily on the attitudes of audiences towards suffering (e.g. Höijer, 2004; Scott, 2014; Kyriakidou, 2015; Seu, 2015). These studies seem to offer partial findings based on one context only (either the media or the public). The relationship between media effects and public views are not clearly presented. In this respect, Jaworska & Themistocleous (2018) addressed three main challenges warranting the attention of researchers.

Firstly, most research in this area, and particularly studies of the media, tends to draw general conclusions about the research topic as a societal phenomenon. Nevertheless, the conclusions might not be applicable to other contexts (Jaworska & Themistocleous, *ibid*). In consideration of this first challenge, the present researcher attempts to examine how the two Malaysian Airlines tragedies are discursively constructed in different news media contexts. This is especially relevant in the context of diversity, as global air disasters may not mean the same to people from different backgrounds (in this case Malaysia and the UK).

Secondly, many studies concerned with mainstream media representations often assume a causal relationship between media and audiences. Jaworska & Themistocleous argued that although mainstream media are in the public domain, they might not necessarily reflect what the public thinks. In fact, studies have shown that the mainstream media often reflect views of elites (e.g. Don & Lee, 2014; Bell, 1991; Galtung & Ruge 1965). Therefore, this study aims to uncover the relationship between the news media and public perceptions, by comparing and contrasting news media presentation of the air disaster with university students' attitudes towards the air disaster. In this way, it is hoped that the results of the study could help determine the extent to which media representations may reflect public understanding.

Thirdly, some studies concerned with media representations are often conducted with small amounts of media text (Jaworska & Themistocleous, *ibid*). According to Fairclough (1989: 54), the effects of the media are largely cumulative and generally produced through the repetition of particular ways of presenting information as well

as specific ways of positioning the reader. In light of Fairclough's emphasis, Jaworska & Themistocleous proposed corpus-based analysis as a useful analytical tool to provide information on patterns of repeated discourses in larger amounts of data. In order to analyse the media texts of the two Malaysian Airlines tragedies from Malaysian and UK newspapers, the researcher follows the methodology proposed by Jaworska & Themistocleous. In this study, corpus tools and methods are utilised to investigate the most frequent keywords appearing in news articles regarding the air tragedies. The use of corpus tools is particularly important to provide information on the most frequent keywords which appear in a large amount of data.

The study of the media and public discourse is now becoming a genuinely multidisciplinary study including the fields of linguistics, discourse analysis and social theory (e.g. Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Joye, 2010; Jaworska & Themistocleous, 2018). In the study of public discourses on multilingualism in the UK, Jaworska & Themistocleous (2018) followed a two-tier approach including a corpus-assisted discourse study (CADS) and an attitude survey. The CADS approach was used to identify the dominant and most frequently repeated discourses about multilingualism in the British press, whereas an attitude survey was distributed to participants to determine their attitudes toward multilingualism. The multidisciplinary study seemingly offered a more comprehensive understanding of discourses, ideologies and public interest aspects surrounding multilingualism. Therefore, Jaworska & Themistocleous (ibid) argued that studying multilingualism in two public contexts of the media and the views of the public enable us to understand better the mediatisation of multilingualism and its wider effects. Moreover, the study addressed the partiality of research based on one context only (either media or public but not both). Inspired by the methodological framework adopted in Jaworska & Themistocleous's (2017) study, this multidisciplinary study combines corpus-based discourse analysis with a study of attitudes study in investigating the constructions of the two Malaysian Airlines tragedies in the media and public context in Malaysia and the UK.

2.6 Summary

Based on the discussion in this chapter, it is concluded that a study of attitudes in the present research is crucial. This study could be useful to compensate for the gaps in corpus-based discourse analysis by addressing the responses and attitudes of audiences pertaining to the air tragedies. Essentially, the attitudes study is able to ameliorate the methodological flaws of the study of the media (as indicated by

Jaworska & Themistocleous) and provide a more fruitful outcome. As stated by Garrett et al. (2003: 12), the study of attitudes not only concerns what people's attitudes are towards objects, but rather to understand what determines these attitudes. In addition, such a study could tell us about cultural differences and variations within or between communities. Many studies have found that people with different religions, cultures and backgrounds have different attitudes towards certain objects, events and people (Garrett et al., *ibid*). Given the centrality in the present study of keyword analysis from corpus-based discourse analysis, the use of the keyword technique proposed by Garrett et al. (2003) in the attitudes study will be a perfect match to identify the use of language in the media and public domains in relation to the air crises.

In conclusion, the literature review has covered the historical aspects, definitions and some prominent arguments and statements pertaining to the approaches used in the present study. Furthermore, the drawbacks of these approaches have also been identified, followed by solutions designed to improve the methodology and outcomes of the study. Having discussed the key literature that informs this research, the following chapter outlines and discusses the empirical research into the news presentation of suffering. Moreover, the terminology used in the present study is explained.

Chapter Three: Suffering and the news media

This chapter outlines some of the conceptual assumptions that inform and provide guidelines for this study. The first part of this chapter provides a brief overview of the language of suffering. The discussion helps to define the type of suffering which occurred in the tragedies of MH370 and MH17. In the second part, the focus moves to previous studies pertaining to the construction of distant and local suffering in the news media. The review of the literature on mediated suffering then leads on to a discussion of news as a constructed reality. In addition, the language used in the news as well as news frames and audiences' reaction to suffering are also covered in this chapter.

3.1 Introduction: The language of suffering

Originally, the word suffering emerged from the Middle English word 'suffrir' and the Latin word 'suffero', meaning being 'long-suffering' or facing a burden of pain patiently (Anderson, 2014: 4). Today, the word has lost its origin connotation of endurance and is now often used to represent hardship, distress and turmoil (Anderson, *ibid*). Sociologically, suffering also refers to the experience of bereavement and loss (Wilkinson, 2005: 16). It comprises feelings of depression, anxiety, humiliation and distress (Wilkinson, *ibid*: 17). From a medical perspective, suffering is understood as 'a threat not only to self but to a sense of meaning in life' (Ferrell, 1996: 5-6), or 'a state of severe distress associated with events that threaten the intactness of the person' (Cassell, 2004: 32). According to Kleinman et al. (1997: xi) and Joye (2012: 4), '*suffering*' stands for a collection of human problems that have their origins and consequences in the devastating injuries which social forces can inflict on human experience. In this context, Joye (*ibid*) referred to social force in political, social, institutional, economic, welfare, legal, moral and religious terms. Inspired by Cassell's definition of suffering, Anderson (2014: 2) defined suffering as 'distress resulting from threat or damage to one's body or self-identity'. Based on the nature of the present study, which is related to air tragedies, suffering is defined as the experience of loss and grief due to the sudden loss of a loved one.

According to Wilkinson (2005: 17), suffering can be physical, psychological, social, economic, political and cultural. Likewise, Anderson (2015: 4) classified suffering into four different types: physical, mental, social and interpersonal. Anderson (2014: 2) claimed that suffering can vary in intensity, duration, awareness and source. Physical suffering refers to distress resulting from threat or damage to one's physical being.

Mental suffering includes cognitive, affective or emotional suffering such as in depression and grief. The third type of interpersonal suffering may involve social rejection or forced social isolation which are usually inflicted by a primary group such as family and friends. Unlike interpersonal suffering, social suffering usually results from social institutions such as in discrimination or harm against specific social groups (such as minority groups, the disabled or racial groups). The term suffering is used in many different ways and these different types of suffering can overlap and co-occur, Anderson (2014: 3) explored the many synonyms and meanings of suffering as shown in Figure 3.1 below:

Figure 3.1: Words associated with types of suffering

| Suffering Type | Words for Suffering |
|---------------------------|--|
| Physical Suffering (Pain) | agony, discomfort, excruciation, hurt, incapacitation, torture, torment, soreness, acute pain, chronic pain, extreme pain, excruciating pain, unimaginable pain |
| Mental Suffering | anguish, angst, anxiety, addiction, distress , troubled, craving, post-traumatic stress disorder, compulsive disorder, loss , mourning , grief , sadness , disgust, irritation, anger , rage, hate, contempt, jealousy, envy, frustration , heartbreak, fear , panic, horror , indignation , shame , guilt , remorse, regret, resentment , repentance, embarrassment, humiliation, boredom, apathy, confusion , disappointment, hopelessness , doubt, emptiness, homesickness, loneliness, rejection, pity , self-pity, nervousness, restlessness, minor depression, chronic depression, severe depression , hopelessness , self-worthlessness, spiritual confusion , purposelessness, other types of loss of meaning |
| Social Suffering | social exclusion, discrimination, ostracised, persecution, incapacitation, disability, shame (selfostracized), distrust, relative deprivation, subjugation, atrocity, homelessness, unemployment, social rejection, discrimination, bullied, disability, blindness, deafness, bedridden, hunger, war, civil violence, survival risk factors |

Seemingly, it is important to identify the language used in order to define the types of suffering one is going through. As stated by Brinkmann (2014: 630), human beings are meaning-making creatures who can interpret and articulate their suffering through the use of language. In a similar vein, Underwood (2012: v) claimed that 'the language of suffering, as befitting the subject and its investigation in a philosophical treatise, is sensitive and requires handling with care'. In order to determine specific instances of human distress through a given language, Brinkmann (2014) categorised the

language used into four categories: religious, existential, moral, and political. Religious language involves people's responses to mortality and sin, such as in prayers that were usually used to semiotically regulate their thoughts, feelings and actions. Existential language refers to the expression of existential despair. In this case, the phenomena of death, anxiety or despair are regarded as features of human life that are inescapable, and not something people can be freed from medically. For instance, there is no pill that could eliminate the feeling of grief after the death of a loved one. Moral language draws attention to manifestations of guilty conscience and shame. Specifically, this type of language is used for the purpose of praise and blame based on one's action in relation to suffering and distress. Political language represents disapproval in terms of social injustice, including violation and marginalisation.

The categories of the language of suffering enable different aspects of one's situation to appear salient, indicating not only the textual structure of suffering but revealing the discourse of suffering in a given event, culture or society. Anderson (2015: 6) stated that cultural differences may lead to variations in emotional expressiveness and the assignment of meanings to a wide variety of situations involving pain and suffering. In a similar vein, Johansson & Sternudd (2015: 342) asserted that every instance of suffering is both individually experienced and culturally and socially shaped. The study of language used in suffering could help to expose different forms of understanding, action and discourse concerning the human condition. Inspired by the notions of the language of suffering, the present study attempts to investigate language use in news media regarding the tragedies of MH370 and MH17 as examples of local and distant suffering.

3.1.1 Defining suffering in the air tragedies of MH370 and MH17

In the case of unexpected death and the loss of loved ones, the bereaved not only suffer physically but also experience the mental suffering of grief (Charmaz & Milligan 2006; Döveling & Wasgien 2015). This notion could be applied to the Malaysian Airlines tragedies which involved sudden death and loss of significant others. According to Anderson (2014: 23) much of the world's suffering is caused by natural events or random forces that we are unable to control or prevent. Disasters can be categorised as either natural (such as floods and earthquakes) or human-made (violent conflict and transportation accidents) (Guilloux, 2009: 278; Hilgenkamp, 2006: 354). Similarly, Landesman et al. (2003: 31) referred to natural disasters as

'acts of God or caprices of nature' which are out of our control, while human-made disasters are considered to involve a loss of control (for example, technological failure) which is preventable. Given that the disappearance of flight MH370 was suspected as being due to hijack or technical problems, and the shooting down of flight MH17 involved human error, thus the two Airlines tragedies can presumably be considered human-made disasters.

Based on the statistical report produced by Bureau of Aircraft Accidents Archives (B3A)¹, there were 123 air disasters reported in year 2014 with a total of 1,328 deaths. The air disasters included Malaysia Airlines MH370 (239 death), MH17 (298 deaths) and AirAsia Flight QZ8501 (162 deaths). In fact, the tragedy of MH17 was the worst accident in the year. Statistics also show that 2014 had the most aviation deaths since 2005 (Yan & Cripps, 2014). Thus, it would seem that the provision of better preventive measures with regard to air disasters should be given serious consideration.

Determining the type of suffering and defining the nature of the disasters in the MH370 and MH17 incidents could provide a more in-depth understanding of their contexts and help to explain the findings from the analysis conducted in this study. According to Castree et al. (2013: 109), referring to a disaster as natural or human-made has potentially important discursive and political consequences. For instance, a natural disaster implies forces outside human control, and thus blame is shifted away from the parties that might have had a role in the disaster. Conversely, since by definition human-made disaster could be prevented, issues of blame and responsibility are usually involved, often leading to anger and distrust (Landesman et al., 2003: 31). In addition, Zagefka et al. (2011: 361) discovered that human-made disaster is less likely to encourage empathy in contrast to natural disaster. These conclusions could be attributed to the discourse of blame identified later in the analysis of the newspaper reports as well as the students' attitudes towards the air tragedies.

3.2 Empirical research on suffering and its media coverage

The emergence of new technologies in news and internet media over the past half century has led to the rapid dissemination of disaster-related information (Bonanno et al., 2010: 23). According to Seeger et al. (2003: 196), news media have an important role during a crisis in communicating 'basic information about what happened, the scope of the harm, how the crisis developed, who was affected, and

what responses are being initiated'. Likewise, Hoijer (2004: 515) also claimed that it is primarily through the media that people encounter depictions of the suffering of distant strangers. Seeger et al. (ibid) believed that the messages produced by the media could affect people by suggesting how they should think and what they should do. A similar point was made by Horsley (2016: 155), who stated that 'the media are powerful in both what they cover and what they do not' and also in defining 'what is and is not a disaster'. Horsley argued that the depictions of a disaster and the amount of emphasis given by the media could influence public policy, communication and financing.

Thus, a substantial body of research has focused on the communicative role of news media in the construction of suffering and disaster, exploring the consistency of news coverage of disasters (e.g. Moeller, 2006; Davidson, 2008; Joye, 2009, 2010), the emergence of political discourse related to crises (e.g. Boltanski, 1999) and strategies of disaster resilience (e.g. Cox, et. Al, 2008). Most of these studies (e.g. Moeller, 2006; Höijer, 2004; Thussu, 2004; Chouliaraki, 2006; Ashlin & Ladle, 2007; Joye, 2009, 2010) have shown that the coverage and presentation of suffering were not nature in the news. In fact, a particular ideology and discourse (e.g. 'Us' and 'Other') may be promoted in the news which serves specific corporate, political, economic or cultural agendas. The following section discusses these previous studies to gain insight into the mediated presentation of suffering in the news media. In the present study, the representation of suffering is divided into two categories: distant and local. Distant suffering refers to the 'observation of the unfortunate by those who do not share their suffering, who do not experience it directly, and who, as such, may be regarded as fortunate or lucky people' (Boltanski 1999, 3). In contrast, local suffering can be defined as the experience of those directly affected by the tragedies and, thus, the people involved can be regarded as the victims or unfortunate people.

3.2.1 Representation of distant suffering

The news reporting of disasters, crises and human suffering has become a regular feature of the media (Kyriakidou, 2015: 215). According to Moeller (1999: 5), international news values are not universal but, instead, are determined by specific cultures, politics and ideologies. In Hanusch's (2008) study, the content of German and Australian newspapers was frequently found to concentrate more on deaths from countries which were culturally, politically, economically and linguistically proximate to their own. The content analysis showed that newspapers from both countries

exhibited some distinctive differences in the coverage of death in foreign news. More specifically, disasters from Europe and North America were strongly represented across the newspapers. Hanusch believed this high news coverage was due to the strong cultural links both Australia and Germany have with the countries. In addition, the Jakarta embassy bombing in Indonesia was also found to be heavily covered in Australian newspapers but not in the German newspapers. Hanusch argued that a potential reason for this finding may be due to the closer geographical distance between Australia and Indonesia in comparison to Germany.

In a similar vein, van Belle's (2000) study showed that United States (US) news coverage of distant suffering was generally defined not only by geographical distance but also by the number of people killed in any specific incident. In fact, the number of deaths recorded was found to be the most important factor determining the coverage of a foreign disaster. In other words, van Belle described the coverage of human death as the defining element of a disaster that makes news of it both dramatic and newsworthy. A similar pattern was revealed in Yan & Bissell's (2015) study which investigated US newspaper coverage of 292 global natural disasters from 2004 to 2014. Despite a general lack of coverage of distant suffering when compared to domestic suffering, the US press tended to focus upon larger- rather than smaller-scale disasters when covering tragedies overseas. Specifically, the degree of severity (such as in death tolls and economic losses) and intensity of deviance (the irregularity of the disaster) were found to be the main factors determining US newspaper coverage of the distant suffering. Geographical distance and the degree of mutual relevance of the countries have generally less influence on the news coverage of global disasters in US newspapers.

In terms of the news construction of distant suffering in developing countries, Thussu (2004) argued that the Western media often focused on striking events, conflict and violence, and tended to portray developing nations in negative and stereotypical ways. In addition, Golan (2008) believed that negative portrayals of developing countries in the media can unduly influence the public perspective on these nations. A similar result was revealed in Ashlin & Ladle's (2007) study which investigated the coverage of the 2004 Asian tsunami in UK national newspapers. The analysis showed that the tsunami received relatively little coverage in UK news media. Information about the damage caused by and resilience after the tsunami was largely absent in the newspapers, and hence it was concluded that there was a general lack of interest within the UK news media in the situation. Likewise, Silk (2000: 303) claimed that,

even though the needs of 'distant others' were always emphasised in the newspaper headlines, they were often presented as passive victims who were not able to help themselves, thus creating an impression of 'Third World' dependence upon the West. Moreover, despite growing attention to distant suffering, Hoijer (2004) argued that there are also different ways for audiences to turn their backs on the suffering of distant others. For instance, increasing numbers of victims, humanitarian disasters and ethnic conflicts and the inability of the media to provide in-depth information could lead audiences to gradually lose interest, and to become numb or even immune to human suffering.

The 'us' and 'other' perspective in media discourse is revealed in Joye's (2009) study of Belgian television news reporting on foreign natural disasters. In the study, he observed that distant suffering was constructed with sociocultural differences exhibited between 'us' and 'them' based on levels of poverty, prosperity, danger and safety. Drawing largely upon Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and Chouliaraki's (2006) typology of news discourse, Joye discovered that forest fires in developed countries such as the USA and Australia received relatively more attention. Moreover, the suffering involved was also constructed as closer to the readers as if they were the victims. Conversely, victims of Indonesian floods and landslides and an earthquake disaster in Pakistan were presented as 'others' with lack of connection to readers. In fact, people in developing countries were portrayed as passive victims of the forces of nature. Joye concluded that the Western news media reproduce a kind of global hierarchy by paying greater attention to issues related to Western Europe. Additionally, the news discourse involved inequality in the construction of disasters between developing and Western countries.

A similar finding was revealed in Washer's (2004) study of the representation of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) as a dangerous threat to the UK public. The sample comprised the UK Sunday national newspapers (*Independent on Sunday*, *Mail on Sunday*, *News of the World*, *Observer*, *People*, *Sunday Express*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday Telegraph* and *Sunday Times*). The analysis revealed that these newspapers contained longer articles on SARS which were often more analytical and frequently more lurid in contrast to those in daily newspapers which were short on description. Referring to social representation theory and some previous studies, it was found that the threat was presented with a mechanism of 'othering'. Specifically, China and the Chinese were blamed for the threat and they

were portrayed as an inevitable breeding ground for new infections, creating the impression that they were different to 'us' (UK audiences) as 'others'.

Considering the overall field of research into disaster news coverage, several notions can be identified. Firstly, the proximity of suffering to the home country appears to have a substantial impact on news coverage (van Belle, 2000; Hanusch, 2008; Joye, 2010). In the present study, proximity refers to a number of related elements such as geographical distance, cultural affinity, political links, and linguistic similarity. Secondly, factors such as degree of severity and intensity of deviance (Yan & Bissell, 2015) as well as the number of people killed (van Belle, 2000) can define an international disaster's newsworthiness. Thirdly, those suffering in developing countries are often presented as the negative 'other' who are weak and less capable of helping themselves. Crucially, there is a tendency in Western news media to construct suffering in developing countries with a classification between 'us' and 'other' based on global power and hierarchies.

3.2.2 The discourse of 'us' and 'others'

A number of studies have shown that the construction of international disasters is often based on an inherent belief in the superiority of one's own country over others (e.g. Joye, 2009; Yan & Bissell, 2015; Chouliaraki, 2006). Moreover, it has been found that international news is often evaluated according to the customs of one's own culture (e.g. Joye, 2009; Hanusch, 2008). Locating the paradigms in these studies makes it clear that 'distance' is not simply a physical or geographical distance. Rather it is a distance between classes of people defined according to whether they belong to the group of 'lucky' or 'unfortunate' (Boltanski, 1999), 'West' or 'Others' (Joye, 2009, Hoijer, 2004; Silk, 2000; Washer, 2004), living in 'safety' or 'danger' or 'prosperity' or 'poverty' (Joye, 2009). 'Distance' thus seems to refer not simply to mileage, but to the structure of the world instituted and maintained by power, culture, wealth and race. According to Cottle (2000: 2), the media perform an important role in the interplay of cultural power and the representation of unequal social relations. Cottle argued that it is through the media that audiences are encouraged to construct a sense of 'us' and 'them', 'the West' and 'the rest', 'insiders' and 'outsiders', 'foreigners' and 'citizens', 'normal' and 'deviant', and 'coloniser' and 'colonised'. In this respect, the media potentially create spaces for the identities or the interests of others to be resisted, changed or challenged. As stated by Fabian (1991: 208), the "Other" is never simply given, found or encountered, but made'.

In general, the concept of 'us' and 'other' (also known as 'othering') is seen as 'an attempt to exclude individuals or all members of a group, by focusing on their ascribed or enacted identities' (Hadzantonis, 2012: 75). Hadzantonis claimed that othering is motivated by sociocultural and prejudicial factors. From a sociological perspective, Dervin (2016: 46) defined othering as an intent to differentiate discourses that lead to superiority and inferiority between 'us' and 'them' based on moral and political judgements. In addition, Dervin argued that power is always employed in representation of 'us' and the 'other' in which the latter is often found to be described through the use of a deficit framework. For instance, the view that 'others' are not as good or capable as 'we' are could lead to stereotyping. Feminists, however, refer to the concept of 'othering' as a categorisation between norms and deviants, centres and margins, cores and peripheries, the powerful and the powerless (Aitchison, 2000: 135). Furthermore, Said (1995: 327) also asserted that the distinctions between 'us' and the 'other' is promulgated in West/East, North/South, imperialist/anti-imperialist and white/coloured dimensions. According to McPherson (2015: 2), two important discourses of 'otherness' arise in the Western policy. In the first, the 'other' is usually presented as dangerous, evil and illicit. This discourse is mainly associated with war and terrorism, indicating the West's purported role in seeking justice and taking legal action against terrorists. The second discourse generally represents the 'other' as uneducated, uncivilised and misconceived, implying a crucial role for the West as charitable benefactors helping 'others' who appear to be weak and helpless. Therefore, Dervin (2016: 49) claimed that the discourse of othering could easily lead to prejudice, patronising attitudes, power imbalances, discrimination, terrorism and genocide.

The concept of othering has been studied in fields as diverse as psychology, sociology, gender studies, linguistics, history and anthropology (Dervin, 2016: 45). In addition, studies have pointed out the construction of women as others in male-dominated cultures, colonised people as excluded others in socio-political studies and non-native speakers as others in the teaching of English as a second language (TESOL) context (Richards & Schmidt, 2013: 415). Tekin (2010: 155) believed that the linguistic construction of 'us' and 'others' is achieved through lexicalisation, membership categorisation and the selective use of possessive pronouns. According to Volkman (2016: 222), a conceptualisation of the uses and effects of 'otherness' in texts can be explored using the theoretical contexts of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995a), discursive practices of power (Foucault, 1981), critical theories of representation (Hall, 1997) and theories of othering (Said, 1995). All these theories

seem to share the assumption that any discourses are crucial in representing certain notions about reality and simultaneously producing versions of reality (Volkman, 2016).

3.2.3 Corpus studies of ‘Othering’

Research that has examined the representation of a group of social actors in the media has generally found evidence of negative bias. One of the more interesting corpus studies of ‘othering’ was conducted by Baker et al. (2012) on representations around the word Muslim in a 143 million word corpus of British newspaper articles published between 1998 and 2009. By using methods associated with corpus linguistics and CDA, the results of the study were divided into two sections. First, they focused on common noun collocates of the word Muslim in which all collocates were examined and put into thematic categories. Second, they conducted a detailed analysis that concentrated on the two common lexical collocates of Muslim: community and world. Overall, the first analysis revealed that Muslims were frequently connected to conflict and constructed in terms of homogeneity. In the second analysis, Muslim community and Muslim world were frequently characterised as distinct, in tension with the UK or ‘the West’, seemingly contributing towards a process of ‘othering’.

Following Baker et al.’s (2012) analysis of Muslim community and Muslim world, Partington (2015) compared the representations of the Arab World in the Guardian and the Telegraph newspapers. Using the WorldSmith keywords tool, he revealed that there is a degree of negative stereotyping in the representations. For instance, the UK newspaper keywords included violence, war and military, suggesting a greater concentration on conflict in the Arab World. Based on the findings, Partington concluded that corpus techniques are useful for a study of the representation of one issue or social group in comparison with others, or the representation of the same issue or group across different news outlets. He argued that the corpus technique supplies strong evidence that negative representations are markedly frequent and drastic in one particular media outlet.

Taylor (2017) addressed the theme of ‘othering’ by investigating the functions of the terms community and comunità in two British and Italian newspapers respectively using corpus-assisted discourse analysis. In order to maintain comparability across the countries, Taylor included one newspaper with a left-liberal political orientation

and one with a right-conservative orientation in each sub-corpus. All articles referring to IMMIGRANT/immigration, MIGRANT/migration from 1998 to 2012 were collected. The analysis showed that the terms were used prominently to describe others (as the outgroups). Within the context of immigration, the terms were used in various discourses of 'othering'. For instance, the others are weak, and at worst responsible for their own 'otherness' and a threat to the 'us' of the speaker.

Other related studies include that of Potts (2015), who focused on the use of nomination and prediction strategies in an investigation of news reporting on the impact and aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in American newspapers. Potts aimed to discover how a group of social actors is constructed in the news reporting of a disaster. The study revealed that the media paid more attention to ethnicity and poverty, which strongly favoured objectification, segregation and othering. Potts argued that such values may not be realised explicitly but often arise by association with other out-groups.

In the present study, methods from corpus linguistics and CDA are used to analyse the construction of the Malaysian airline tragedies in newspapers as well as to examine the discourse of 'us' and 'others' in the airline tragedies context. While corpus linguistics give analysts an initial focus in their scrutiny of data (Baker et al., 2012), discourse analysis helps to examine how language ideologies intertwine with articulated reasons for the identification of 'others' (Anderson, K., 2007: 183). Therefore, corpus-based discourse analysis is considered to be a useful analytical tool in examining the discourse of 'us' and 'other' in media texts, providing a way to understand the non-obvious ways in which evaluations of groups are communicated and shared through media (Taylor, 2017). The background of corpus linguistics, CDA and the conceptual framework of this study are discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

3.2.4 Representation of local suffering

Having acknowledged the representation of distant suffering in the news media, it is also crucial to look at the representation of local suffering in local newspapers. This is especially the case since it is felt that the examination of the representation of both local and distant suffering can help in determining the extent to which a tragedy is presented similarly or differently across different media. As stated by Bonanno et al. (2010: 23), the majority of people in the regions involved tend to rely on national news

networks for information during crises. Therefore, it is important to examine the construction of domestic disasters in local newspapers.

In a study of local suffering, Pasquarè & Pozzetti (2007) discovered that natural catastrophic events in Italy were often presented with a general lack of accuracy and pluralism in local newspapers. This general absence of in-depth scientific coverage of natural causes was deemed to be the result of a lack of scientific expertise among the journalists. For this reason, the political, economic and human-related implications of natural disasters were instead often amplified in news articles to attract the interest of audiences. In a similar vein, Priest et al.'s (2006) study of coverage in two local newspapers of a 2005 train wreck in South Carolina demonstrated that scientific explanations and expert voices about the disasters were not prominent. Such information constituted only 4-17 per cent of the news coverage. In fact, the victims' experiences were emphasised in the newspapers, helping to frame the events as an unexpected disaster with little or no attention to causes, systemic failures or errors made by railway companies. Priest et al. believed that this emphasis may encourage community healing and helping it to move on. For instance, stories about schools reopening, tributes, funerals, financial assistance and efforts to bring the community back to normality were observed in the news reports. As indicated by Horsley (2016: 155-162), most disaster reporting pays more attention to the immediate event rather than broader issues of how and why a disaster strikes, due to reporters' lack of scientific understanding.

Similar results were reported by Cox et al. (2008) in a study which focused on the dominant discursive construction of the large-scale McLure forest fire in British Columbia, Canada in 2003. They developed a corpus consisting of two hundred and fifty fire-related articles from a local newspaper, *The North Thompson Star Journal*. The data analysis showed that the local tragedy was constructed within a neoliberal discursive framing of recovery. Sub-topics related to economic and material aspects of the effects of the fire were emphasised in the news. Additionally, expertise discourse was observed to be promoted in the texts to direct the recovery. According to Sprain (2015), expertise discourse encompasses 'a wide variety of ways in which people can position themselves as experts or draw on expertise within a given interaction'. It is associated with the presentation of specialist knowledge or appealing to expertise, such as offering technological solutions and delivering counterintuitive findings.

For instance, the forest fire-fighters were constructed as 'trained' and 'experienced' experts who successfully managed the incident. In contrast, sub-topics related to the psychological and emotional effects of the fire such as sadness, grief and anger were minimised and often rendered invisible in the texts. Cox et al. argued that the media tended to focus upon what had been preserved as opposed to what had been lost. In this respect, the authors. (ibid: 476) characterised the discourse of recovery as about a 'return to normalcy', referring to efforts made to repair environmental and property damage. This included a general focus upon the return to previous daily activities such as children returning to school.

Leitch & Bohensky's (2013) study provided further indicative results in an examination of the use of the word 'resilience' and how it was embedded in narratives in Australian newspaper articles from 2006 to 2010 based on the case of the flood that affected Brisbane, Australia in 2011. Several key findings were revealed by the analysis. Firstly, the media portrayal of the impact of the disaster on the community often emphasised physical disruption and social consequences, such as how much damage was done. Secondly, resilience was found to be promoted in the text through a sense of community spirit and cohesiveness. Thirdly, given that the disaster was unexpected and prolonged, external support was crucial in helping the community to return to normalcy. Fourthly, there was a lack of reflection on learning beyond reference to past experience and formal preparedness programmes. Indeed, concepts of community spirit and coping overshadowed learning (from the past) as an aspect of resilience. In addition, greater attention was paid to 'short-term' constructions of resilience that matched political timescales. Hence, Leitch & Bohensky claimed that floods in developed countries are likely to be portrayed not as natural disasters but as political disasters.

Mayes (2000: 30) claimed that almost all news reporting of a domestic crisis is focused on emotions. In fact, emotional indulgence and sentimentalism are tending to replace informative, facts-based news reporting. This type of presentation is known as therapy news. In a similar vein, Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen (2011) stated that the news coverage of national disasters is often embedded with emotions such as grief, horror, empathy and anger, focusing largely on the victims or the community. A linguistic analysis conducted by Gortner & Pennebaker (2003) of media coverage of the Texas and A&M (known as The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas) bonfire tragedy provided evidence in support of the emotions narratives. The student newspapers *The Battalion* (Texas A&M University) and *The Daily Texan* (University

of Texas at Austin) were selected for comparative analysis, and it was assumed that the two newspapers would portray the bonfire disaster in a different light due to their contrasting levels of involvement in the tragedy. The University of Texas paper served as the control as it was not directly affected by the trauma, in order to determine if the tragedy was presented differently. This point is particularly important to the present study, which compares Malaysian and UK newspapers based on their different kinds of involvement in the air tragedies.

Gortner & Pennebaker investigated the use of words denoting positive and negative emotions and also considered differences between the schools in the use of the words 'I' and 'we'. The purpose of selecting these words was to gain insight into the extent to which the reporters used inclusive language. They believed that the analysis could reveal the shifts in perspective between individual and collective selves. The linguistics analysis yielded several interesting results. Firstly, the two newspapers were rich in emotional content and focused on both individual and collective effects. The emotions covered in the news were mostly negative (such as trauma and grief) instead of positive. Secondly, the news reporting at Texas A&M was more collectively and socially oriented as opposed to University of Texas, displaying a sense of loyalty and school spirit after the tragedy. Gortner and Pennebaker believed that this was due to the fact that Texas A&M was directly affected by the bonfire accident whereas the University of Texas was not. They concluded that 'a community-wide tragedy generates a collective experience of shared trauma and grief' (Gortner & Pennebaker, *ibid*: 601).

Although grief and compassion are typically portrayed in disaster news coverage, there is often also room for anger and blame at those held responsible (Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011: 108). Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen examined the articulation of anger in the news coverage of British man-made disasters that involved human error and systemic failures between 1952 and 1999. They asserted that the news media play a role in representing citizens and their views via description and proscription. Therefore, the emotional expression of anger in the news could open up a space in the public sphere for particular forms of political action and also to guide action in society. Their analysis sheds light on some key points, showing that anger is both expressed and politicised in British news coverage of local disasters. Specifically, there were frequent expressions of emotion in the news surrounding ideas of blame, criticism and accountability towards those perceived as responsible for a crisis. In this respect, victims were empowered by being given opportunities to express themselves

politically, to critique power holders, and to raise questions of systemic failure and blame.

The aforementioned literature suggests that expressions of emotion in domestic news media should not be underestimated. As stated by Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen (ibid), emotions have a crucial impact on the process of making political and moral judgements. Mayes (2000) took this point a little further and argued that news can distort reality by giving priority to certain emotions. An excellent example was provided by Calcutt & Hammond (2011: 115) and Hammond (2002: 193) in relation to the distortion narrative of the bombing of Kosovo (also known as the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia) that lasted from 5 March 1998 until 11 June 1999. These scholars claimed that the bombing had been distorted in the news by simplistic narratives of 'good' versus 'evil'. The use of this dichotomy apparently encouraged the emotions of sympathy for the victims, and in turn led people to welcome attacks on Serb forces. This emotional indulgence were also influenced by a statement made by the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair describing the bombing as 'a battle between good and evil; between civilisation and barbarity; between democracy and dictatorship' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 4 April 1999). The statement implied the necessity of political attacks against the terrorists. As a result, Calcutt & Hammond concluded that the news is a distortion of reality and journalists do more than merely report on crises. Essentially, these studies reveal the important effects of emotional material presented in newspapers which could potentially influence the public's perspective and serve a particular political agenda.

3.3 News as a constructed reality

Taken together, several conclusions can be drawn from the findings gained in the aforementioned studies. Looking closely at the construction of international disasters, previous studies shown that, in general, factors such as scale, number of deaths, degree of severity, the intensity of deviance, actuality and reliability are important in determining the nature of the coverage of distant suffering and to engage audiences. More specifically for developing countries, some studies suggest that suffering is likely to be presented within the western media by means of a classification between 'us' and 'other', largely as a result of geographical, cultural and political factors (e.g. Joye, 2009, 2010). In this case, the UK news media coverage of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies can be critically studied to investigate if the division between 'us' (a

positive self-image of a social group) and 'other' (assessed and represented in a negative way) occurred in UK newspapers.

It is observed that the news presentation of local suffering is usually attached to the concept of recovery and resilience, focusing more fully upon what was retained than what was lost. Previous studies, however, have produced contradictory findings concerning the presentation in the news of negative emotions such as grief and loss. For instance, Cox et al. (2008) claimed that emotional effects of tragedies such as sadness and grief were less likely to be expressed in news articles for mitigation purposes, whereas Hammond (2002) and Calcutt & Hammond (2011) believed that the news media paid relatively more attention to the presentation of negative emotions for political reasons. Based on the discussion of previous studies, the Airlines tragedies are anticipated to be constructed with either a lack of scientific information due to the lack of understanding among journalists or with the use of discourses of expertise in relation to aiding the recovery process.

More generally, suffering seems to be socially, politically and culturally constructed in the news. Different media organisations tell a news story differently by embedding different values in their stories. As stated by Schudson (1989: 263), a multitude of studies of the news carried out in the past have spoken of the matters of 'construction of the news', 'making news' and the 'social construction of reality', indicating that the news has for a long time been in the business of constructing reality. Likewise, Shoemaker & Reese (1996: 15) argued that news provides information that society finds useful and acceptable, rather than the truth. In other words, what issues or events are reported in the news may not be a reflection of the importance of those events. Rather, it is more likely to reveal the process of a complex and artificial set of principles of selection (Fowler, 1991: 2).

Media bias in terms of news selection may be due to several factors, including the ideology of democracy (Fowler, 1991), the degree of government control of the media (Östgaard, 1965), and commercial pressures and competition (Fairclough, 1995b). Therefore, the news can be defined as involving practices or discourses which are far from neutrally reflecting social reality and empirical facts (Fowler, 1991: 2). Additionally, Fairclough (1995b) claimed that powerful interests can decide what should be said and how to say it. There has long been a concern that the construction of news tends to work in the favour of those who hold power over the media. Fairclough (1995b: 2) highlighted several examples of the power of the media. Firstly

the media may have the power to shape governments and political parties. An excellent example is revealed in Silvio Berlusconi's victories in Italian elections from 1994 to 1995, 2001 to 2006 and 2008 to 2011. According to Fairclough (*ibid*), Berlusconi's control of the Italian media (owning three television channels with a 40% share of audience and a national newspaper) played an important role in making him the prime minister of Italy. Presumably, the coverage of Berlusconi in the news helped build his reputation and established a good image among the public.

Secondly, the media are able to transform suffering into entertainment. Fairclough provided the example of the civil war in Rwanda, which had received little attention from the media but suddenly became the main item in the television and other news media. The coverage of the events included shocking tales of suffering and death among huge numbers of Hutu refugees. Fairclough asserted that the availability of high quality film of the appalling human suffering turned the Rwanda's war into a 'famous' event.

A third example is related to the ability to project certain cultural material into another community. For instance, Rupert Murdoch's trip to Delhi, India over the past decade was made available for viewing on five satellite television channels, with 2.5 billion people watching. According to Fairclough, the media thus brought the popular culture of North America and Western Europe into Indian agricultural communities which still depended upon bullock power. Therefore, Fairclough argued that the linguistic and discursive nature of media power should be recognised as important elements in research on contemporary processes of social and cultural change.

In the light of Fairclough's approach to media discourse, it may not be appropriate to perceive news merely as a reflection of reality, but a process of selection and construction that is controlled by authorities, journalistic practices and societal norms. As stated by Gieber (1964: 173), news is the social construction of reality and it is what newspapermen make it. Based on the discussion above, the present study accepts the notion that news media coverage does not necessarily reflect reality but has gone through various process of selection and framing to suit certain agendas. As such, media content is altered by various factors and the result is that descriptions by the media may be to a greater or lesser extent different from reality.

3.4 News values

The identification of news values is fundamental to an understanding of general standards of newsworthiness. According to Cramer (2011: 69), 'news values are the criteria by which journalists decide which events count as news and which features of those events are most newsworthy'. Galtung & Ruge (1965) proposed 12 news factors that explain the selection of news events. The first eight factors are to be read as 'culture-free', solely based on perception. These include: Frequency, Threshold, Unambiguity, Meaningfulness, Consonance, Unexpectedness, Continuity and Composition, (Bednarek & Caple, 2017: 28). Meanwhile the remaining four factors are 'cultural-bound' such as Reference to elite nations, Reference to elite people, Reference to persons, and Reference to something negative. Figure 3.2 provides description of each form of news value (adopted from Cramer, 2011).

Figure 3.2 Galtung & Ruge's (1965) 12 news factors

| News value | Description |
|--------------------------------|---|
| F1: frequency | If the frequency of the event matches the frequency of news production, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F2: threshold | If an event is extreme, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F3: unambiguity | If an event is unambiguous, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F4: meaningfulness | If an event resonates with dominant cultural values, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F5: consonance | If an event matches conventional expectations, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F6: unexpectedness | If an event is unexpected or rare, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F7: continuity | If an event has already been reported, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F8: composition | If an event complements the other stories reported in a news section or broadcast on a given day, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F9: reference to elite nations | If an event features elite nations, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F10: reference to elite people | If an event features elite people, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F11: reference to persons | If an event highlights the actions or qualities of a specific person, it is more likely to be reported. |
| F12: reference to something | If an event is negative, it is more likely to be reported. |

As Galtung & Ruge's (1965) 12 news factors reveal a strong focus on the dominant, the conventional, the concrete, the rare, the extreme and the negative (Cramer, 2011: 70), their approach is useful in defining the news values that come into operation when journalists select stories. However, one should also bear in mind that news values can change over time, from place to place and between different sectors of the news media (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009: 171). In the present study, Galtung & Ruge's news factors are used to aid the discussion of the findings concerning differences in news selection between Malaysian and UK news media.

3.5 Language in the news

Whilst the previous studies provide important insights into the presentation of disasters in news media and the news as constructed reality, there appears to be a general lack of attention paid to specific texts as a medium of communication, most particularly in terms of detailed textual analysis. Fairclough (2003) believed that the fine-grained linguistic analysis of newspaper texts is crucial. since newspapers have historically reflected the contemporary language and culture of a particular society. Moreover, the linguistic analysis of media texts can bring to light patterns of variation in language use within newspapers from different countries which reflect fundamental differences in culture, audience and purpose. Therefore this study attempts to address the shortcomings of previous work by examining how the Malaysian Airlines tragedies are linguistically constructed as local suffering in Malaysia and as distant suffering in the UK.

According to Fowler (1991:4), the relationship between news and language is hard to specify, as the news is a representation of the world in language. Cotter (2010: 16) referred to the language of news as involving linguistic elements that are related to the syntax (e.g. sentences), phonology (e.g. accent), lexicon (e.g. word choice), sociolinguistics (e.g. attitudinal study) and pragmatics (e.g. inferences) used in news media. Nowadays in newspapers language is used in a straightforward way to suit the rapid reproduction of a view of the world. In other words, news language is composed in the main of short, eye-catching and condensed sentences. Contrary to the early newspaper language, contemporary newspaper language is also influenced by broader linguistic trends (Conboy, 2007) and each particular form of trends in linguistics carries ideological distinctions (Fowler, 1991). According to van Leeuwen (1987), the social purposes of journalism vary; some being overt, for instance entertainment and factuality, while others are covert, such as social control and

legitimation. This is perhaps the reason why such a variety of linguistic features has developed within newspapers. Overall, differences in terms of the selection of vocabulary, metaphorical associations and intertextual references to other popular media could distinguish today's newspapers from the press in the past (Conboy, 2007: 133).

In the news media, language is claimed to be carefully selected and adopted to suit a variety of social and cultural demands. Conboy (2007:10) argued that the language used in each news medium is different to diverse audience. Taking this point a little further, the language style of each news medium could be said to represent an exercise in audience design (Bell, 1991), implying the cultural and social practices of a group of people. Other possible reasons that affect newspaper presentation and language include limitations of space, channel of delivery, the circumstances of reporting, deadlines, other concurrent news on the same day, and access to sources (Conboy, 2007: 8). Besides these, the journalists' language attitudes and consideration of the audience significantly affect the language used in newspapers as well (Cotter, 2010: 25). Presumably, contemporary newspapers use language that their reader can easily relate to in his or her own cultural experiences and attitudes.

Journalists make use of engaging language to create influential stories that have an impact to the society (Busá, 2013: 1). As mentioned by Richardson (2007: 10), newspaper language 'represents social realities and also contributes to the production and reproduction of social reality or social life'. In a similar vein, Conboy (2007) asserted that the language used in newspapers plays a major role in the social construction of reality. What he is suggesting is that language is a meaning-making code that imposes a structure of values, such as social and economic orientations, on anything that it is presented. News items are created so as to be more newsworthy through the use of stronger vocabulary (Bell, 1991). Hence, it can be concluded that the news is subject to change and so as the language. In the present study, the comparison between the two news corpora (Malaysia and UK) is supposed to lead to representative results. For instance, differences in the choice of words in Malaysian and UK news articles may be attributed to language acquisition (first language vs. second language) and cultural differences as well as a dominant appearance of diverse 'political voices'.

3.6 Empirical research on news framing and the public's response

News as constructed reality can shape public opinion and create perceptions that become widely held (van Dijk, 1991). In other words, news framing can influence human behaviour and attitudes (Maier et al., 2016: 1014) towards a crisis. Therefore, there has been a growing body of empirical studies concerned with audience reactions to suffering (Höijer, 2004; Kyriakidou, 2014; Scott, 2014; Von Engelhardt and Jansz, 2014; Seu, 2015; Huiberts & Joye, 2017). These studies can be divided into two kinds consisting of audience-based studies which focus on types of audience's responses to mediated human suffering, and media-based studies which discussed news frames that influence audience responses and attitudes towards suffering.

In media-based studies, emotional news framing has been found to be important in determining the audience's response. As stated by Kim & Cameron (2011), emotional news frames can affect people's responses to a crisis. They examined how news coverage of the accidental explosion of *GeoTech* cell phone batteries influenced the emotional responses of undergraduate students from a large Midwestern university as well as their subsequent perceptions. The analysis revealed that different news frames in anger-inducing versus sadness-inducing news items affected the students' emotional responses to the crisis, and in turn influenced individual attitudes towards the company responsible. The findings suggest that news frames which focus on relief and the wellbeing of the victims of a crisis are likely to increase the public's perceptions of corporate credibility in comparison to news frames of law, justice and punishment. Furthermore, Kim & Cameron argued that, even though the company's wrongdoing was emphasised in the news, the public tended to pay more attention to relief for victims than to information about the punishment of the company. Therefore, it can be argued that emotional news framing is important in determining the public's responses and attitudes towards suffering.

In a different vein, Huiberts and Joye (2017) argued that a sense of shared or overlapping experience is crucial in encouraging an audience to engage with distant suffering. In other words, audiences tended to empathise with suffering if the news discursively links the experience of the foreign event to the home country. Von Engelhardt & Jansz (2015) similarly suggested that a lack of shared experience is a greater obstacle to empathetic responses towards distant victims as opposed to geographical distance and perceived cultural or ethnic dissimilarity. These authors

proposed four dimensions in the presentation of distant suffering in the news which may engage or distance audiences with respect to distant suffering: 'distance', 'scale', 'actuality' and 'relievability'. In this study, 'distance' refers to shared experience between audiences and distant sufferers, and von Engelhardt & Jansz argued that a lack of shared experience could restrict the level of empathy shown for victims. In other words, audiences who shared the same experiences were more capable of empathising with mediated suffering than those with no such experience.

The second dimension of 'scale' refers to the numbers of distant sufferers. In this respect, von Engelhardt & Jansz claimed that feelings of compassion are most likely to be incited by individual rather than collective cases. The third dimension of 'actuality' describes the extent of the realness and consequentiality of the news stories. It is argued that suffering can achieve realness only if it triggers action in audiences such as donations. The final dimension of 'relievability' draws attention to the mitigation and prevention of suffering in the future. Several points were highlighted in relation to relievability. Firstly, perceived self-efficacy can increase feelings of compassion towards distant victims. Secondly, the term 'human-made disaster' is less likely to encourage empathy in contrast to 'natural disaster'. Thirdly, providing statistical information about potential beneficiaries could encourage donations by audiences in comparison to giving descriptions of victims.

In their audience-based studies, Kyriakidou (2015) provided an empirical investigation of audience reactions towards distant suffering that go beyond expressions of compassion or pity, whereas Höijer (2004) was more concerned with the forms of compassions arising from mediated human suffering among audiences. Drawing upon the concept of media witnessing, Kyriakidou developed an analytical framework to explore audience engagement with news of distant suffering. The framework was applied to an empirical study of Greek audience responses to three distant disasters, the Southeast Asian tsunami of 2004, Hurricane Katrina and the Kashmir earthquake of 2005. Four articulations of the witnessing experience were identified: 'affective', 'ecstatic', 'politicised' and 'detached' witnessing.

In 'affective' witnessing, audiences were observed to use affective language such as 'shock' and 'touched' to describe their emotional reactions to suffering and the victims. This included an assumption of sameness connecting the audience to the victims. This type of witnessing is referred to as 'tender-hearted compassion' in Höijer's (2004) study of the discourse of global compassion. This type of compassion potentially

gives rise to responses of pity and empathy. This is indicated in interview data such as 'It's so terrible' and 'It breaks my heart'. In the case of 'ecstatic' witnessing, however, the audience position themselves as immediate witnesses through the use of temporal deixis, such as 'at that moment' (Kyriakidou, *ibid*). In other words, the audience is drawn into the scene of suffering as if they were witnessing it happening in front of their eyes.

'Politicised' witnessing describes the implication of political discourses in the audience discussions of their experience of mediated suffering (Kyriakidou, *ibid*). In this respect, the search for causes and the attribution of blame and political responsibility for the events, are often involved. This type of witnessing was found to be similar to Höijer's (2004) 'blame-filled compassion' in which the audiences bought up the suffering of the victims in combination with indignation and anger. Furthermore, audiences tended to express anger towards someone seen as responsible for the disasters.

When audiences refer the experience of suffering as something remote or irrelevant to their life, it can be considered to be 'detached' witnessing. Kyriakidou (*ibid*) claimed that a lack of emotional engagement among audiences towards suffering could be due to both emotional and geographical distance from the suffering. According to Höijer (2004), there are two ways for audiences to turn their backs on the suffering of distant others. One way is to reject and criticise the news for commercialism and sensationalism by paying too much attention to human suffering. Another way is to form distance through an 'us' and 'them' perspective in which, for example, distant sufferers are dehumanised as primitive and uncivilised.

In addition to Kyriakidou's (2015) concept of witnessing, Höijer (2004) proposed another two forms of 'shame-filled' and 'powerlessness-filled' compassion. The former describes a situation in which audiences connect the suffering of others to their own conformable lives. Audiences may be ashamed for being passive and not engaging with the victims' misfortune, for example in 'I get furious with myself because I do nothing'. In the latter, a subjective awareness of the limits of the audience's ability to help the victims is exhibited; for instance in, 'You feel so helpless and there is so little you can do. You can of course give some money but that will not stop the war'. In sum, Höijer argued that various forms of compassion may be expressed differently and/or simultaneously by individual audiences. Given that the last two forms of compassion are likely to elicit emotional reactions such as shame

and helpless in audiences, they are group under Kyriakidou's (2015) category of affective witnessing in the present study.

After the detailed literature review, the concepts of news frame and responses are operationalised to allow a more structured and clear empirical analysis of audience reactions to the Malaysian Airlines tragedies. As stated by Huiberts & Joye (2017: 2), most research on human suffering has focused more on the journalist's side of the story, and audience reactions to the news are often neglected. Hence, the present researcher includes audiences in the study. To make sense of the concepts of audience attitudes towards mediated distant suffering, the researcher chose to extrapolate from Kyriakidou's (2015) four types of witnessing along the lines of Höjjer's (2004) four forms of compassions. A summary of the concepts is shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: A summary of the concept of audiences' attitudes (adopted from Kyriakidou, 2015 & Höjjer, 2004).

| Kyriakidou (2015) – the concept of witnessing | Højjer (2004) – forms of compassions | Audiences reactions |
|---|--|--|
| Affective witnessing | - Tender-hearted compassion - Powerlessness-filled compassion - Shame-filled compassion | Sad, pity, empathy, shame and helpless |
| Ecstatic witnessing | - Nil. | At that moment, fear |
| Politicised witnessing | - Blame-filled compassion | Political conflicts, blame, condemnation, anger |
| Detached witnessing | - Distantiation from compassion | Irrelevant, dehumanised, 'us' versus 'them' |

With regard to media-based studies, types of news frames – including Kim & Cameron's (2011) emotional news frame, Huiberts and Joye's (2017) overlapping experience and Engelhardt & Jansz's (2015) four dimensions of distant, scale, actuality and relievability – are particularly important for the discussion of the extent to which the news construction of the Malaysian Airlines MH370 and MH17 tragedies are reflected in participants' attitudes toward the tragedies. More details of this analysis are provided in the discussion of methodology in Chapter 4.

3.7 Summary

Media studies have investigated human suffering from a wide variety of perspectives and using many methodological approaches. Some scholars prefer to focus mainly on distant suffering (e.g. Hanusch, 2008; van Belle, 2000; Ashlin & Ladle, 2007) while others are more concerned with local suffering (e.g. Pasquarè & Pozzetti, 2007; Cox et al., 2008; Leitch & Bohensky, 2013). While rich in findings, each study illustrated a specific example of suffering, revealing views about human suffering that might only be applicable in one context, whether distant or local. Therefore, the present researcher believes that a distinct advantage of this study is its focus on the Malaysian Airlines tragedies as distant suffering in the UK context and local suffering in the Malaysian context. In other words, the present study proposes to examine how the air tragedies were discursively constructed in two different media domains.

In addition, an attitudinal study is added to explore the extent to which media discourses are consonant or diverge from the attitudes of university students. Regarding the applied methodologies, it is remarkable to notice that there is lack of language analysis on human suffering and only a small body of research (e.g. Gortner & Pennebaker, 2003) has analysed suffering by examining the choice of words. For this purpose, the researcher draws upon keywords analysis on the news presentation of suffering.

This chapter has detailed the broader context of the thesis with a detailed discussion of the language of suffering and the construction of distant and local suffering in the news media. Furthermore, this chapter has also covered key concepts drawn from previous studies, including the discourse of 'us' and 'other' and news as a constructed reality. The nature of language in the news and audiences' reactions toward mediated human suffering were also discussed. The following chapter outlines and discusses the methodology used in the present study.

Notes:

1. Accident archives. *Bureau of Aircraft Accidents Archives*. (2018, March 20). Retrieved from http://www.baaa-acro.com/crash-archives?created=2014-01-01&created_1=2014-12-31&field_crash_region_target_id=All&field_crash_country_target_id=&field_crash_registration_target_id=&field_crash_aircraft_target_id=&field_crash_operator_target_id=&field_crash_cause_target_id=All&field_crash_zone_target_id=&field_crash_site_type_target_id=All&field_crash_phase_type_target_id=All&field_crash_flight_type_target_id=All&field_crash_survivors_value=All&field_crash_city_target_id=

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the overall design and specific analytical approaches adopted in this study. Firstly, the discussion begins with an emphasis on the aims and research questions which serve as the base of the selection and adoption of the analytical tools and approaches in this study. Secondly, the researcher draws attention to the relevance of newspapers in Malaysia and the UK in particular to highlight the reasons for the choice of newspapers. The discussion covers the historical background of the selected newspapers: *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *New Straits Times (NST)* and *Malaysian General News (MGN)* and point to the number of circulation and readers. Thirdly, the researcher provides a brief overview of the conceptual framework adopted in this study before explaining the two methodological stances – corpus-based discourse analysis and an attitudes study in more details.

Having outlined the overview of the conceptual framework of this thesis, fourthly, the researcher discusses the details of the first methodological stance – corpus-based analysis and looks closely at the computational methods such as corpora building and keywords analysis. The computer programme *Sketch Engine* is used to generate the large amount of data. In addition, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and specifically Fairclough's (1992: 73) three-dimensional model is discussed. The precepts of CDA are crucial in this study in interpreting the results for keywords obtained from corpus-based analysis.

Sixthly, the second methodological stance used in the attitudes study is explained. In this section, the criteria for selecting participants and research instruments such as questionnaire are further discussed. Finally, the chapter moves to the setting in which the study is undertaken, and the procedures involved in data collection and analysis.

4.2 Aims and research questions

The study aims to determine the ways in which Malaysian Airlines tragedies MH370 and MH17 are linguistically defined and constructed in terms of keywords. The second aim of this study is to examine the differences and similarities in terms of keywords, topics or issues covered by the different Malaysia and UK news media organisations to determine if the air tragedies are under- or overrepresented in the

news corpus. Following this, this study also seeks to identify and investigate the types of discourse that are presented in the news articles in order to reveal the ideology that are being promoted and practiced in the society. Essentially, this study would like to examine the discourse of 'us' versus 'others' in the context of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies. Finally, the attitudes study is carried out to investigate the Malaysian and UK University students' attitudes toward the Malaysian Airlines tragedies MH370 and MH17. In order to achieve the aims of the study, the research questions have been designed in line with the aims as follows:

1. (a): How were keywords used to represent the disappearance of the Flight MH370 and what does this reveal about differences and similarities in media reporting about the flight in the two countries?
(b): How were keywords used to represent the shooting down of the Flight MH17 and what does this reveal about differences and similarities in media reporting about the flight in the two countries?
2. In what ways (if any) is the discourse of 'Us' versus 'Others' are constructed in the UK and Malaysian newspapers?
3. What are the a) Malaysian and b) UK university students' attitudes towards the Malaysian Airlines tragedies?
4. To what extent, and, in what ways, are there a) similarities and b) differences between the construction of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies MH370 and MH17 in the Malaysian and UK newspapers and Malaysian and UK university students' attitudes toward the tragedies?

Based on the research questions above, the data and methods adopted in this study have been carefully selected to ensure that these questions can be answered appropriately and effectively.

4.3 The data

The data that were selected for this analysis were extracted from two Malaysian newspapers: the *New Straits Times (NST)* and *Malaysian General News*, and two UK quality newspapers: *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*.

4.3.1 Why Malaysian and British newspapers?

There were several reasons for selection of Malaysian and UK newspapers in investigating the construction of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies. Firstly, the different social backgrounds between the two nations are significance to the study. In Malaysia high value is generally ascribed to collectivism (Tafarodi, & Smith, 2001: 77) so that people value organisational benefits more than individual interests in addition to the promotion of social membership and communal interest (Holtgraves, 2014: 169). In contrast, UK is considered one of the individualist country in the world after USA and Australia (Lochtman & Kappel, 2008: 27). In individualist cultures, self-interest is promoted and single persons as individuals are focused upon (Holtgraves, 2014: 169). The divergent backgrounds of the two countries could influence the ways used to writing and deliver messages. As stated by van Dijk (2008: 17), different cultures structure discourse in different ways. Along the same lines, Holtgraves (2014) claimed that language practices and grammar promote cultural worldviews. In fact, cultures with high collectivism have been shown to embrace high levels of power distance compared to individualistic cultures (Seyed Yasin et al., 2014: 245). Therefore, awareness of the socio-cultural distinctions between Malaysia and the UK is helpful when aiming to explain the styles of writing and choice of words used in the newspapers published in the two countries.

Secondly, both of the tragedies considered involved aircraft with ties to Malaysia but not the UK, but the UK provided assistance to Malaysia after the loss and crash of the respective aircraft. Thus the feelings and emotional reactions involved in the two countries may differ and this could contribute to different presentations of the air accidents in these countries. In addition, the construction of the tragedies is considered to be 'self-representation' in the Malaysia news media because the incidents were tied directly to Malaysia where the airline company was based; whereas, it is seen as an 'other-representation' in UK news media which reported on the tragedies from the stance of international news. Presumably, the types of discourse presented in the newspapers are likely to be different on the two countries, and therefore analysis can helps in giving a better understanding of what resources are repeatedly employed to establish particular discourses in the news.

Thirdly, English, the native language in UK, is learnt as a second language in Malaysia, and hence there may be some overt differences in linguistic features such as lexical items used and semantic prosody between the two countries. Likewise,

some studies have suggested that there are differences in linguistic expressions between the first and second language users in the news (e.g. Chung, 2011). All of the factors discussed above may contribute to different presentations of the issues, and thus are worthy of investigation.

4.3.2 Malaysian English newspapers

In Malaysia, the official language is Malay, and English is learnt as a second language in the country (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014). The importance of the English language in Malaysia is influenced by the fact that Malaysia was under British rule from the 18th to 20th centuries. During this period, the English language was promoted through education and in politics and economics (Thirusanku & Yunus, *ibid*). In the 19th century, more than forty English language newspapers were published in the Malay peninsula (Mohd Sani, 2009: 31). These newspapers, which were published by the British colonial administration to serve British interests and for business purposes, include *The Malacca Obeserve*, *The Perak Pinoor*, and one of the most popular newspapers, *New Straits Times (NST)*, which still exist today (Thirusanku & Yunus, *ibid*).

Mohd Sani (2009) asserted that these English newspapers were dominated and controlled by the British through repressive laws and colonial power. Unfortunately, after Malaysia gained independence, the newspapers are still under government control. In fact, these newspapers now served as institutional protection for the Malaysian government (Mohd Sani, *ibid*). More specifically, the daily newspapers in Malaysia today are controlled by the Barison Nasional (BN), the largest political party in the Malaysian Parliament. In fact, some studies have indicated that the newspapers in Malaysia were positive toward the BN and were negative toward to opposition parties during Malaysia's 2004 general elections (see Anuar, 2007). In short, it was shown that Malaysian newspapers were biased in favour of the government.

The landscape of Malaysian English newspapers can be divided into several categories as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Examples of Malaysian English Newspapers (adopted from: ABYZ News Links)¹

| | English Newspapers (Online only) | English Newspapers (Print and Online) |
|----------|---|--|
| Regional | <i>Kuala Lumpur News</i> <i>George Town Daily</i> | <i>Daily Express</i> <i>New Sabah Times</i> <i>New Sarawak Tribune</i> |
| National | <i>The Malaysia Insider</i> <i>Free Malaysia Today</i> | <i>New Straits Times (NST)</i> <i>The Star</i> |

4.3.2.1 Criteria for selection of Malaysian English newspapers

In light of the objective of this study, only newspapers written in English were chosen for the analysis. It is important to mention that the initial plan was to include the two widely read Malaysian English newspapers *The Star* and *New Straits Times (NST)*. However, given that *The Star* has not been made available in any of the online databases such as NexisUK, efforts were made to contact the publisher. Unfortunately, the researcher received no response. In consideration of time constraints, *The Star* was removed from the study. It was then decided to replace *The Star* with the newswire service the *Malaysian General News (MGN)*, which seems sufficient in terms of identifying relevant articles and it also fulfilled the criteria for selection of newspapers in this study. In this study, the *MGN* is regarded as a Malaysian English newspaper similar to the *NST*.

Both the *NST* and *MGN* were chosen based on several criteria: the type of newspapers, circulation, history of newspaper publishing and, most importantly, the accessibility of the news articles. The selection of the *NST* was motivated by the following reasons: firstly, it is a national daily newspaper for readers in Malaysia. In considering the matter of the tragedies as an international issue which involved several countries such as China, Russia and Ukraine, it was decided that regional newspapers which are more focused on regional issues would be excluded. The national newspapers may be more characteristic of society in general and they cover more reports of tragedies compared to regional newspapers. In addition, national newspapers are claimed to be more authoritative and influential than regional or weekly publications (Tan, 2006: 62). Secondly, according to a report from the Audit Bureau of Circulations Malaysia², the *NST* was one of the most read and a leading quality English newspaper in the country in 2014. Additionally, the *NST* was established in 1845 and is the oldest surviving English newspaper in Malaysia. The

assertion of the status of this newspaper can also be reinforced by the fact that it has been widely studied in many fields (e.g. Anuar, 2007; Yusof, 2009; Chung, 2011; Azlan et al., 2012).

The second newspaper, the *MGN* is provided by Bernama Newswire, the national news agency of Malaysia. It is also one of the country's leading content providers of up-to-the-minute news reports, television, radio, and the internet. Bernama Newswire was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1967 and it is managed by a Board of Governors appointed by the King of Malaysia. Bernama employs more than 300 journalists and photojournalists who report daily from Malaysia and worldwide, including from Bangkok, Beijing, New York, Berlin, Melbourne and other cities³. In addition, the *MGN* provided more coverage of the air tragedies in comparison to the *NST* (see section 4.4.1.1), allowing a more fruitful analysis of the news discourse about suffering. Essentially, the *NST* and *MGN* are both available and accessible via the chosen online database NexisUK. Based on the criteria discussed above, these two Malaysian English newspapers are considered suitable for the analysis of the Malaysian press.

4.3.3 The British newspapers

As mentioned earlier in section 1.4.2, UK newspapers can generally be classified in three types (Knight & Pattison, 2015: 164-165). First, the quality newspapers take a serious approach to political issues with little or no attention to celebrity gossip. Their readers are mainly from professional and management groups. Unlike the quality newspapers, the red-top tabloids widely cover sex scandals and celebrity gossip. The coverage of political stories is limited. Their readers consist mostly of the working class. The third type is a combination of the first and second groups of newspapers; namely, mid-market newspapers. These newspapers contain more of a mix of politics and social affairs as well as celebrity stories. Hence, they have a larger range of readers from professionals to public sector staff (Knight & Pattison, *ibid*). Figure 4.2 below shows some examples of British newspapers (online + print versions).

Figure 4.2: Examples of British Newspapers (adopted from: NRS PADD)⁴

| Quality | Tabloid | Regional |
|---|---|--|
| The Daily Telegraph The Guardian The Independent The Times | Daily Mail Daily Mirror The People The Sun | The Press and Journal The Herald Metro Yorkshire Post |

According to Gabrielatos & Baker (2008: 8), most UK newspapers make no attempt to hide their stance, but rather they express their points of view in an explicit and sophisticated way through the use of language such as in collocations or sentence structure. Gabrielatos & Baker claimed that the press holding a degree of social power in deciding on the amount of coverage to be given to specific events or incidents. Essentially, these newspapers publish various articles on the same issues but expressing different views. In a similar vein, Knight & Pattison (2015:166) stated that each UK newspaper has its own slant and position and this could be perceived as being left- or right-wing. It is nevertheless important to emphasise again that left-wing refers to support for the idea of a bigger state, believing in taxation to help the poor and working towards equality across society, whereas, right-wing means support for the institutions of the country and believing in freedom to succeed over equality. Based on the objectives of the present study which are more concerned with the linguistic features of newspaper content, their political standpoints are acknowledged in the discussion of the findings but more emphasis are given to linguistic elements.

4.3.3.1 Criteria for selection of British newspapers

As mentioned in section 4.3.2.1, the focus of the study is national newspapers, and thus all regional newspapers from the UK were excluded. Since all the newspapers were published in the English language, attention was focused on the types as well as the circulation of newspapers. For ease of comparison, only quality or broadsheet newspapers were chosen for this study. According to Bednarek (2008:13), quality newspapers and tabloids are distinct in language and content. Quality newspapers have a better standard of language and are broadly concerned with politics, economics and global issues, whereas tabloids cover human interest stories (Bednarek. ibid). In addition, quality newspapers provide detail on political and social matters through in-depth investigation and they break many of the biggest political stories in the strongest traditions of journalistic excellence (Knight & Pattison, 2015: 166). Therefore, in considering the Malaysian Airlines tragedies as international issues, it was decided that the quality newspapers were more suitable for the present

study and tabloids, which are more exclusively concerned with entertainment rather than news, are excluded.

According to a report by the National Readership Survey (NRS), *The Daily Telegraph* was the most read quality newspaper in the UK in 2014 with 16.4 million readers over the course of a month, followed by *The Guardian* with 16.3 million. *The Daily Telegraph* was first published in London in 1855 and is now run by the Telegraph Media Group. It is distributed throughout the UK and internationally. According to the editors of *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, this newspaper takes a conservative, middle-class approach to its comprehensive news coverage.⁵ In other words, this newspaper combines a high standards of news reporting and editorial presentation. Therefore, Knight & Pattison (2015:165-166) described *The Daily Telegraph* as the UK's biggest-selling quality newspaper and one of its most influential national newspapers. The power of *The Daily Telegraph* can be witnessed in a case in 2009 in which some members of parliament (MPs) were sent to jail after the newspaper revealed that some of their expenses claims were shown to be fraudulent. This was one of the biggest UK political stories in decades (Knight & Pattison, *ibid*).

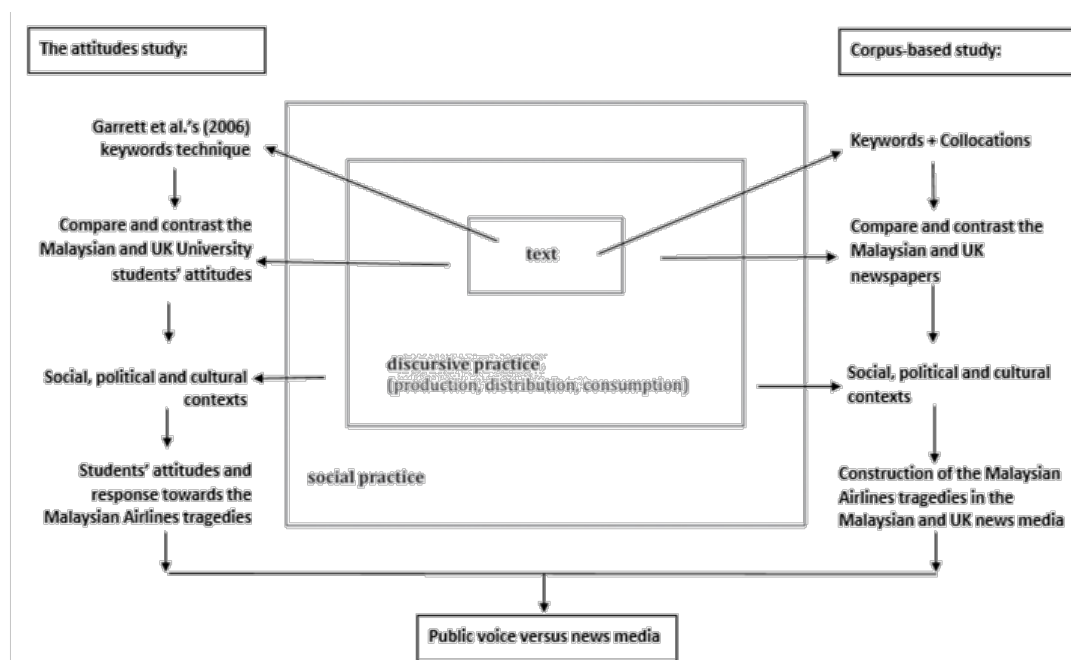
The Guardian was previously known as *The Manchester Guardian* and was founded by John Edward Taylor in 1821. *The Guardian* is considered to be a high-quality newspaper which has won multiple British awards such as National Newspapers Awards.⁶ Furthermore, it has been honoured as having *the* best publishers and editorial and advertising teams by the British Society of Magazine Editors (BSME). Generally, *The Guardian* supports the Labour Party and is firmly on the left of British politics (Knight & Pattison, *ibid*). Hence, it is mostly read by people who work in the public sector and urban-based intellectuals.

As stated by Gabrielatos & Baker (2008: 8), newspapers are an excellent source of data for the examination of the construction of a particular event or issue in a society. Based on the historical background, achievements and characteristics of these two newspapers, it seems plausible to conclude that *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* would provide a useful source of data for the study of the construction of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies.

4.4 Conceptual and methodological framework

Generally, the design of this study is outlined with reference to research questions and empirical research method. As explained earlier, the approach of the study consists of two methodological stances: Corpus-based discourse analysis and the attitudes study. A summary of the conceptual framework adopted in this study is presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3. A summary of the conceptual and methodological framework of the present study (expanded from Fairclough's three dimensional model).



Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model, which includes textual analysis (of text), contextual analysis (discursive practice) and interpretative analysis (social practice) is used as the fundamental framework in the present study. This framework provides a basis for corpus-based analysis and the attitudes study. Each of the analyses is design according to the three dimensions. In corpus-based analysis, the analysis of the first dimension of text is mainly informed by the most frequent keywords and collocates obtained from the news corpora. To achieve this goal, the computer software, Sketch Engine was used to generate data. Sketch Engine is a leading sophisticated corpus query tool that allows users to upload their own corpus and can handle up to 8 million words of data (Durrell et al., 2013: 249). Subsequently, keywords that share similar meanings are grouped into the same semantic category to reveal the topics represented in the newspapers.

In the analysis of the second dimension of discursive practice, keywords and topics presented in media reporting about the flights in Malaysia and the UK are compared and contrasted in a detailed concordance analysis. Finally, the analysis of the third dimension of social practice involves a wider discussion examining how the keywords and topics are used in the social context, particularly in relation to the dichotomy of 'us' versus 'others'. In this respect, the present study is largely influenced by the work of Gabrielatos & Baker (2008) and is guided by an understanding of how specific texts in particular contexts create or maintain certain discourses.

In the attitudes study, the first dimension of text is analysed in terms of the keywords pertaining to the air tragedies provided by Malaysian and UK university students. Garrett et al.'s (2006) keyword technique is used to obtain data from the students' responses. For the analysis of the second dimension, the keywords provided by the students are grouped into different semantic categories based on Krippendorff's (2013) thematic distinctions. For the third dimension, Kyriakidou's four types of 'media witnessing' are used to determine and explain students' attitudes towards the air tragedies in a social context. The purpose of the attitudes study is to investigate the extent to which the media construction of the Airline tragedies reflect public understanding and which are contested.

The outcomes from the corpus-based discourse analysis and the attitudes survey are then compared and contrasted in terms of media versus the public's voices to find out if the representation of the airline tragedies in the media reflects voices of the public. The methodological framework used is further detailed in the following sections.

4.4.1 First Methodological stance: Corpus-based discourse analysis

This section of chapter 4 provides a description for the first methodology stance in this study. There are several important concepts in this methodological stance: corpora building, keyword analysis, collocation analysis, concordance analysis and critical discourse analysis.

4.4.1.1 Corpora building

Two specialised corpora were built in this study based on the two different airline tragedies (MH370 and MH17). First, the UK news corpus consists of The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian, whereas, the Malaysian news corpus includes New Straits Time (NST) and Malaysian General News (MGN). The data was then saved in four different folders according to the country as well as the type of tragedy (e.g. UK news corpus: MH370, UK news corpus: MH17, Malaysia news corpus: MH370 and Malaysia news corpus: MH17). The corpus data used in the investigation of the tragedy of MH370 comprised 110,169 tokens from Malaysian news corpus and 167,954 tokens from UK news corpus. For the case of MH17, there were 79,485 tokens from Malaysian news corpus and 153,401 tokens from UK news corpus (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Distribution of Malaysian and UK news corpus by tragedies and tokens.

| Corpora | tokens |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1) UK News Corpus | |
| I. UK News Corpus – MH370 | 167,954 |
| II. UK News Corpus – MH17 | 153,401 |
| 2) Malaysian News Corpus | |
| I. Malaysian News Corpus – MH370 | 110,169 |
| II. Malaysian News Corpus – MH17 | 79,485 |
| Total | 511,009 |

The breakdown of the number of tokens and articles according to the different tragedies and newspapers are shown in Table 4.2 and 4.3 below:

Table 4.2: Distribution of the UK News Corpus by tragedies, newspapers, tokens and number of articles.

| Tragedies | UK News Corpus | Tokens | Articles |
|------------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| MH370 | 1. The Daily Telegraph | 46,856 | 63 |
| | 2. The Guardian | 121,098 | 135 |
| MH17 | 1. The Daily Telegraph | 58,677 | 80 |
| | 2. The Guardian | 94,724 | 106 |
| Total | | 321,355 | 384 |

Table 4.3: Distribution of the Malaysian News Corpus by tragedies, newspapers, tokens and number of articles.

| Tragedies | Malaysian News Corpus | Tokens | Articles |
|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| MH370 | 1. New Straits Time (NST) | 36,580 | 60 |
| | 2. Malaysian General News (MGN) | 73,589 | 155 |
| MH17 | 1. New Straits Time (NST) | 22,932 | 44 |
| | 2. Malaysian General News (MGN) | 56,553 | 142 |
| Total | | 189,654 | 401 |

The sample of articles for the case of MH370 was selected with the date restriction from 8 March 2014 until 31 July 2015. For the case of MH17, the news articles were collected from 17 July 2014 until 31 October 2015. Both corpora covered the period when the tragedies were most reported and this correlated with the dates of the incidents, the investigation as well as the discovery of wreckages, the victims' body and the black box⁷.

All types of news articles such as editorials, reports and letters to the editor which were published within the time frame were selected for the study. All of these contribute to the information available to readers about the disappearance of flight MH370 and the shooting down of flight MH17, and thus were considered relevant to this study. The present analysis was carried out by country, newspapers and by search term. The search terms used in this study were '*MH370*' and '*MH17*' which referred specifically to the aircrafts and the incidents. The results were filtered to exclude duplicates or highly similar items as determined by NexisUK. Additionally, to ensure that coverage of the tragedies was topical and that they were not mentioned in passing, only articles in which these terms occurred 3 times or more were included in the corpus. In other words, the news articles that did not fall within the scope of the study, which investigates the construction of the two Malaysia Airlines tragedies, were excluded. The data retrieved from the database were then stored in separate folders according to country and tragedy, as mentioned earlier.

4.4.1.2 Keyword analysis

In this study, the researcher adopted Bondi & Scott (2010) and Baker's (2010: 26) definition of a keyword as a statistically significant word frequency (highest or lowest) in a text or corpus when compared to the standards set by a reference corpus. In generating keyword searches in this study, each of the Malaysian and UK corpora was compared to a general corpus – the British National Corpus (BNC). The reason

for the comparison was to avoid skewed findings resulting from the texts of different newspapers existing in the data. Using Sketch Engine, the keyness scores of the keywords were calculated using normalised frequency values. The normalised frequency is a statistic based on occurrences per million words (McEnery & Hardie, 2011: 50). Specifically, the frequency indicates the occurrence in which ‘word W is N times as frequent in corpus X versus corpus Y (Nesi & Gardner, 2012: 15). In short, normalised frequency allows us to determine if the word is more or less common in the news corpus compare to BNC.

Given that the sizes of the two news corpora are relatively small (less than 500,000 words), while BNC is considered to be a large corpus (100 million words), it is helpful to use the normalised frequency when comparing two datasets of unequal size (Anderson & Corbett, 2017: 32). In this respect, normalised frequency usually tell us the number of occurrences of a word per thousand or sometimes per million words (Anderson & Corbett, *ibid*). In sum, the keyness score was calculated according the following formula (based on Kilgariff et al., 2014):

$$\frac{fpm_{focus} + n}{fpm_{ref} + n}$$

fpm_{focus} is the normalised (per million) frequency of the word in the focus corpus (in this case: Malaysian news corpus and UK news corpus) and fpm_{ref} is the normalised (per million) frequency of the word in the reference corpus (in this case: BNC). n is the parameter and the default value is 1.

Due to time constraint, only the top 50 keywords were examined in this study. Subsequently, these keywords were grouped into different semantic categories (Gabrielatos & Baker 2008, Baker et al. 2013) to uncover the specific groups of meaning to which the tragedies are related. The semantic categories were then elaborated upon manually. It must be clarified that the categorisation does not rely so much on the dictionary meaning of the keywords, as on the topics they index in the corpus articles. In addition, since some keywords could belong to more than one semantic category, their use in context was carefully examined by looking at concordance lines.

The use of concordance analysis is crucial to uncover common patterns associated with the keywords (Baker et al., 2012). In this study, all of the concordance lines which centred around the keyword (both left and right context) were manually examined. The researcher then selected and brought together lines that have formal similarities.

The method involves combining lines that contain repeated surface patterns and similarities in meaning that are not automatically visible through the exact repetition of a sequence of words. It should be noted that concordance lines may contain different representations; however, only the most common patterns are selected for analysis. For instance, the majority of lines centred around the keyword 'Russia' contained negative evaluations, such as 'failed', 'anger', 'culprit', 'denied'; thus, giving a sense of Russians as negative 'others' (see chapter 5).

4.4.1.3 Collocation analysis

It is pertinent to clarify that the initial plan of the study was to focus mainly on keyword analysis. However, the researcher decided to include a small element of collocation analysis in the study to further investigate the collocates associated with the terms 'MH370' and 'MH17'. Due to the fact that these two terms were used with double the frequency in the Malaysian news corpus in comparison to the UK news corpus (see sections 5.4 and 5.5). Hence, a further investigation was important to determine and explain the results. As stated by Gabrielatos & Baker (2008: 10), collocations offer information about the most frequent or salient ideas associated with a word.

This study adopted Gabrielatos & Baker's (2008:11) definition of collocation as the 'co-occurrence of two words within a pre-specified span, when the frequency of the co-occurrence is above chance, taking into account the frequencies of the 'node' (the word in focus), its collocates and the collocation itself.' Sinclair et al. (2004) highlighted a few important aspects in determining if two words are significant collocates. The first is the length of the text in which the words occur, the second is the numbers of times the two words occur in the text as well as the number of times they appear together.

In this present study, collocability was determined through the measurement of logDice using sketch Engine (Rychlý, 2008) and the span was set at five words to the left and right of the node (-5, 5). LogDice was chosen for this study due to several reasons. First, logDice has been shown to work well with corpora of different sizes (e.g. Rychlý, 2008; McEnery et al., 2006) because its score does not depend on the total size of a corpus. Therefore, the independent score was deemed suitable for this analysis which consists of two different sizes of corpora (see section 4.4.1.1). Furthermore, logDice is considered more reliable than other measurements such as Mutual information (MI) which tends to favour low-frequency words (Hu & Yang,

2015:34). In addition, Rychlý (2008: 7) claimed that logDice is stable on subcorpora and the values are in reasonable range.

The measurement of logDice is shown in the statistic below.

$$\logDice = 14 + \log_2 D = 14 + \log_2 \frac{2f_{xy}}{f_x + f_y}$$

Based on this, Rychlý (2008: 9) explained that the number 14 is the theoretical maximum in case when occurrences of X co-occur with Y and vice versa. The expected value is usually below 10. Rychlý claimed that the bigger the value, the higher the co-occurrences of XY, for example, +1 means twice often collocation whereas +7 means around 100 times frequent collocation. However, there is also a chance to obtain value 0. Value 0 reflects the situation in which there is less than 1 co-occurrence of XY per 16,000 X or 16,000 Y. Negative values on the other hand means there is no statistical significance of XY collocation. Rychlý (ibid) argued that the size of a corpus does not affect the score rather, the score combine relative frequencies of XY in relation to X and Y.

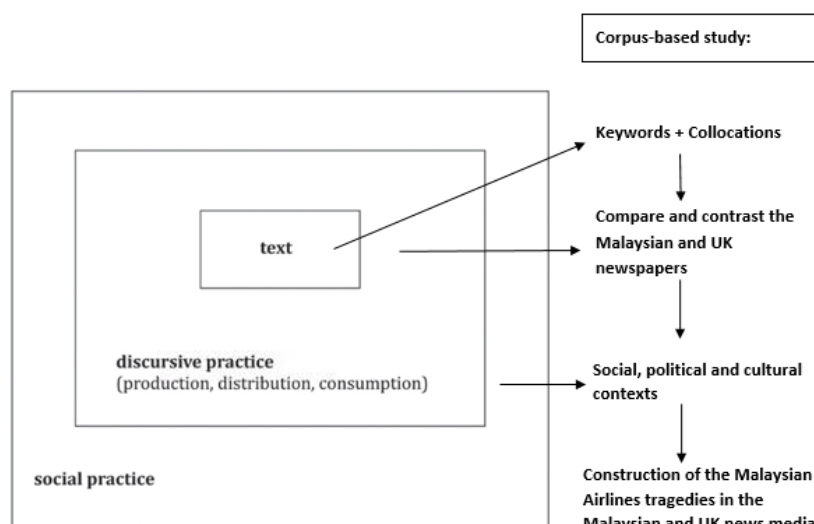
4.4.1.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The analysis in the present study involved Fairclough's (1992: 73) three- dimensional discourse model which served as a background framework in the light of which the relationship between language use, news media and society could be studied. The selection of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis was motivated by its three detailed stages connecting texts, discourse and social practice. The combination of Fairclough's (1992: 73) three-dimensional model and corpus linguistics is shown in Figure 4.4.

As can be seen from Figure 4.4, the analysis consists of three dimensions. Firstly, in textual analysis, the 50 most frequent keywords were derived from Sketch Engine via a frequency-based comparison of the news corpora and BNC. Subsequently, the keywords were grouped into different semantic categories. Since some keywords could belong to more than one semantic category, the keywords were then qualitatively examined via detailed line-by-line concordance analysis, in order to determine the meanings of keywords that could not otherwise be easily spotted. This textual analysis is used to provide a preliminary comprehension of the texts pertaining to the tragedies. As stated by Paffey (2012: 29), the descriptive stage of textual

analysis allows a deeper account of the text to be developed as well as aiding in giving a better understanding of how topics, hidden agendas and purposes are linguistically constituted.

Figure 4.4: Framework for the combination of Fairclough's (1992: 73) three-dimensional model and corpus-based analysis



Secondly, in order to provide an in-depth analysis, it is crucial to refer to discourse practice in the sense of production and consumption of texts. In this stage, the semantic categories of the top 50 keywords were critically examined and discussed. According to Stubbs (2001: 65), semantic categories show the relationship not between individual words, but among a set of semantically related words. Therefore, semantic category is, according to Baker (2006: 87), a set of related words that suggests a discourse. The contextual analysis of the semantic categories was carried out by comparing and contrasting the topics revealed in the media reporting between the two countries. This was done through a detailed concordance analysis to determine the linguistic features surrounding the keyword in two different news media sources.

The third stage involved a wider analysis taking a closer look at social factors. In this stage, background information about Malaysia and the UK in terms of politics, culture and economic status was explored and discussed. In considering these wider social practices, the researcher paid particular attention to whether or not the news texts would help to continue or reproduce inequalities or other undesirable social practices. In particular, the researcher attempted to investigate further Joye's (2010) finding

concerning the news coverage of international crises which tended to construct and maintain the socio-cultural difference between 'us' and 'other'. Joye argued that the construction of 'us' and 'other' is based on a division of the world into zones of danger and safety, prosperity and poverty. In this case, the news media coverage of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies was critically studied to investigate if the division between 'us' (a positive self-image of a social group) and 'other' (assessed and represented in a negative way) occurred in the newspapers.

4.4.2 Second methodological stance: The attitudes study

In light of the third research question, this second methodological stance was used to examine attitudes among the participants pertaining to the Malaysian Airlines tragedies. Even though this study focuses primarily on corpus-based discourse analysis, the additional inclusion of an attitudes study is important to offer a more comprehensive understanding of discourses and ideologies surrounding the air tragedies and their public uptake. For instance, corpus-based discourse analysis provides a picture of the production and consumption of media texts pertaining to the tragedies, whereas the attitudes study sheds light on opinions expressed in the public's voices toward the tragedies. In order to achieve the aim of the study, the participants were selected based on several criteria and, moreover, a questionnaire was used as a research instrument to obtain information about the participants' attitudes toward the tragedies.

4.4.2.1 Criteria for selection of participants

The population selected for the present study was principally the Malaysian and UK nationals currently studying at the university in the respective country. The choice of university students as participants was made for several reasons. Firstly, as university students, it is likely that their educational qualifications and levels of English language proficiency would allow them to provide relevant keywords in questionnaire responses. Secondly, due to the nature of the study which focuses on Malaysian and UK newspapers, it was felt that the choice of participants should be logically appropriate to the choice of the newspapers, as their representative audiences. Thirdly, as a result of time constraints and restrictions of finance and accessibility, it was not possible to conduct a study amongst working adults, children and the elderly population. Most universities are very helpful in supporting researchers by providing access to potential participants and, therefore, university students were selected as

participants in this study. As a result, the sampling method adopted can be referred to as 'convenience' sampling.

The data were gathered from samples of 50 students from the UK University and 50 from the Malaysian University. The sample size of participants included in this study was inspired by Szalay & Deese (1978: 24) and Garrett et al.'s (2006: 397) recommendations in claiming that a sample size of between 50 to 100 participants could provide robust results in word association studies. Furthermore, Dörnyei (2007: 99) stated that the ideal sample size for correlation research in linguistics is at least 30 participants. Since the present study correlates results from the analysis of newspapers and attitudes, 50 participants seemed sufficient to allow for generalisation to be made concerning the keywords provided by the participants. As these participants were all selected by convenience sampling in the respective institutions in different countries, there were inevitable difference between the two groups. However, based on the nature of the study, the differences between the participants may provide important insights in the comparative analysis of individuals of two different nations.

In order to achieve representativeness in the UK news audiences, the participants from the UK were all UK-born university students who held British passports at the time of data collection. Similar criteria were applied to the Malaysian participants. The Malaysian sample was collected from Tunku Abdul Rahman University (UTAR) located in the state of Perak, Malaysia. UTAR was launched on 2002 as a not-for-profit private university and is ranked in the 'Top 100' in the Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings.⁸ The data collection was undertaken with the assistance of academics from the University. The Malaysian participants comprised 28 female and 22 male students aged between 20 and 59 years (Mean = 27.16, Standard deviation = 10.1). Of the students, 17 were postgraduates (PGs) and 43 were undergraduates (UGs).

In the UK, the sample was collected from Northumbria University, located in Newcastle upon Tyne in the North East of England. There were 31 female students and 19 male students. The range age of the sample was between 20 to 69 (Mean = 28.14, SD = 9.57). 30 of the participants were postgraduates and 20 were undergraduates. A summary of the choice of participants is shown in Table 4.4 (a) and (b) below:

Table 4.4 (a) A summary of the choice of participants in Malaysia and the UK (by gender).

| | Malaysia (N=50) | UK (N=50) |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Female | 28 | 31 |
| Male | 22 | 19 |

Table 4.4 (b) A summary of the choice of participants in Malaysia and the UK (by degree).

| | Malaysia (N=50) | UK (N=50) |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Undergraduate | 43 | 20 |
| Postgraduate | 17 | 30 |

4.4.2.2 Research instruments

This section provides a description of each of the research instruments employed in the study. The design of the research instruments involved a great deal of consideration of the methodologies developed in previous studies and their suitability for the nature of the present research. Two research instruments were chosen, a questionnaire and incident diagrams for the airline tragedies.

Research instrument 1: Questionnaire

The aim of the research instrument was to investigate by direct means the attitudes of the participants concerning what the tragedies or words 'MH370' and 'MH17' meant to them. In concordance with Garrett et al.'s (2006) keywords technique, a questionnaire was used to obtain spontaneous emotional and cognitive responses from the participants to the terms 'MH370' and 'MH17'. This technique can be considered as a free-response word association task in which the participants were asked to provide keywords to describe the tragedies. According to Garrett et al. (2006: 396), free response approaches offer less chance of monitoring and bias to occur because the responses occur more rapidly than those that are embedded in the full grammatical forms of language. Drawing on Garrett et al.'s assumption, the keywords with the most frequency were considered to reflect salience and that salience was assumed to reflect the participants' attitudes towards the subject of investigation.

The questionnaire comprised two sections. In the first, the participants were asked to provide three keywords to describe each of the tragedies. They were given a questionnaire with columns where they were to write down the keywords for each

tragedy. It should be noted that the number of keywords were reduced from five to three due to the UK participants being less familiar with the Malaysian Airlines tragedies (see pilot test in section 4.5). Asking for five keywords may have led to a dearth of comments from the participants as they might have already used up their keywords to describe the incidents. Therefore, three keywords seems more reasonable to elicit relevant answers, and in addition this number of keywords is in line with Garrett et al.'s 2003 study. In the second section, personal information was requested regarding the participants' university, course, age and gender. It is pertinent to mention that the present study concerns mainly the participants' nationality as representatives of news audiences, and this background information was used only to give a more detailed description of the participants and was not included in the analysis.

Research instrument 2: MH370 and MH17 diagrams

The principle aim of the diagrams was to stimulate the students' memory of the tragedies in order to answer the questionnaire. Since the tragedies had occurred in 2014, three years prior to the date of data collection in 2017, it seemed important to evoke the students' memory of the tragedies using stimulus material. According to Crilly et al. (2006), diagrams such as maps and photographs are considered to be effective instruments to stimulate thought and are a valuable tool in conveying those thoughts to others. Crucially, it is found to be useful in enhancing communication between researchers and participants by providing a strong foundation for the objects or activities involved (ibid: 361). In the present study, the diagrams of MH370 and MH17 were adapted from an online news resource, the *Daily Mail*. The diagrams were chosen based on their features to provide concise information about the tragedies in a graphic and user-friendly way. In the diagrams, background information about the tragedies such as date of occurrence, flight paths and consequences were provided. The information was presented following the sequence of events (e.g. 1, 2, 3...) together with the maps to guide the participants through each whole incident. The diagram for each tragedy was printed separately on A3 paper for better visual effect. The final versions of the diagrams are shown on the following page (for a complete version of the research instruments, see Appendices 6 and 7).

The details provided in the two diagrams were potentially general information about the tragedy. The issue-oriented information such as Russia military and war were avoided to reduce the possibility of leading the participants towards a particular

ideology. The general information should stimulate the most memorable memories of MH370 and MH17 among the participants.

Figure 4.5. MH370 diagram (adapted from Daily mail)



Figure 4.6. MH17 diagram (adapted from Daily mail)



It should be noted that the diagrams were used only as stimuli to help the students to provide relevant keywords in their questionnaire responses. Hence, the diagrams were given optionally to the students for reference. As stated by Garrett et al. (2005: 45), the more accessible an event is, the more likely it is to come to mind automatically. Presumably, if the participants had access to the relevant items regularly, they should be able to give them a ready meaning without needing to refer extensively to specific contexts. Nevertheless, there is an issue to consider with regard to the possibility that some participants may simply take the keywords from text in the diagrams. In such cases, Garrett et al. (2005: 46) claimed that despite the risk that participants may simply repeat forms in the stimuli, there is a possibility that the keywords are still seen as the most relevant terms by them. Therefore, the

keywords may still identify the semantic features to which the participants attach most importance.

Even though the Malaysian students were potentially more familiar with the tragedies, the stimulus materials were still available to both the UK as well as the Malaysian participants in order to achieve a fully comparative analysis. As suggested by Szalay & Deese (1978: 27), the research strategy must focus on equivalents, even though stimuli could be interpreted differently among the participants from different cultures, and thus employing the same materials as stimulus aided the comparative analysis.

4.5 The pilot test

A pilot test is important to a study as a pre-test to try out a research instrument (Baker, T. L., 1994: 182-183) and to address any problems before the main study is carried out (Tavakoli, 2013: 468). Specifically, a pilot study is used to assess the feasibility and usefulness of the research instruments and to allow any necessary revision to be made before they are used with participants (Tavakoli, *ibid*). In a similar vein, Creswell (2003: 158) claimed that it is crucial to carry out pilot testing to establish the content validity of the instrument and to improve questions, format and scales. In addition, Dörnyei (2003: 64-65) asserted that two formal trial runs are needed to perform more accurate testing of the research instrument: the initial piloting of the instrument and the final piloting of the instrument. It is for these reasons that two pilot tests for the attitudes study were carried out to examine the questionnaire as well as the stimulus materials used in the present study. The research instrument was piloted at different stages of its development.

It is important to clarify that this study initially involved three Malaysian Airlines tragedies: MH370, MH17 and QZ1805, which all occurred in 2014. QZ1805 was an Air Asia flight that was carrying 161 people from Surabaya, Indonesia to Singapore on 28 December 2014. Due to bad weather, the aircraft crashed into the Java Sea, killing all the people on board. After the first pilot survey, the air tragedy of QZ1805 was removed from the study. More details are discussed in the following section.

4.5.1 The initial pilot test

The first pilot test was carried out to examine the UK university students' awareness of the three Malaysian Airlines tragedies. The students' knowledge of the air tragedies was crucial for them to be able to respond to the questionnaire later. Students who were not aware of the incidents may have ended up not answering the questions or providing insufficient answers. Therefore, this pilot test was important to provide an idea of the levels of familiarity among the UK students with the Malaysian air tragedies. The test was conducted informally at Northumbria and Newcastle Universities from March 2015 to July 2015. Overall, 10 local students from different faculties, courses and universities were randomly chosen to take part in the pilot test. The test was conducted via casual conversations between the researcher and the students. The venues and events in which the test was carried out are detailed in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7. A summary of events, location, date and number of participants in the first pilot test.

| Event | Location and date | No. of participants |
|---|---|---------------------|
| 10 th Newcastle upon Tyne Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics | Newcastle University (20th March, 2015) | 3 |
| Summer Term | Lipman Building and library at Northumbria University (25-27 April, 2015) | 4 |
| The 13 th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference | Northumbria University, (20-25 July 2015) | 3 |

During the conversations, the students were asked if they had heard or seen news about the Malaysian Airlines tragedies which happened in the year 2014. Unsurprisingly, all informants answered 'yes'. Then, the researcher asked, 'which Airlines tragedies are you aware of?' Seven students were observed to be able to describe the incidents without naming the aircraft. For instance, one of the students said, 'I think there were two tragedies, one went missing, and another one was shot down'. Three of the students were able to describe and to name the aircraft. However, none of the students were aware of the tragedy of QZ8501. After the researcher explained the incident to the students, 3 of them said yes, they had heard about it but were not aware that the aircraft was Malaysian. The rest of the students were

completely unaware of the third incident. In fact, two students asked if there really was a third Malaysian Airlines tragedy.

There are several possible explanations for this outcome. First, the first two striking accidents: MH370 and MH17 may have stolen all the limelight before the subsequent crash of AirAsia Flight QZ8501. The MH370 and MH17 incidents happened in March and July 2014 respectively and were reported widely throughout the year. Conversely, the crash of flight QZ8501 at the end of the year may not have received so much attention from both the media and the public. Secondly, in terms of the status of the airlines companies involved, the aircraft for flights MH370 and MH17 both belonged to the prominent Malaysia Airlines company called MAS, whereas that for flight QZ1805 belonged to Air Aisa, a low-cost Malaysian airline owned by Malaysian businessman Tony Fernandes. Moreover, UK students may be more familiar with MAS which provides more international and European flights in contrast to Air Asia which mainly focuses on Southeast Asia.

Thirdly, the incidents of MH370 and MH17 involved large numbers of international passengers such as Chinese, Dutch, British and Australians. In fact, *MH17 was shot down* over rebel-held territory contested by pro-Russian militants and Ukrainian troops. This appeared to attract more attention in European countries which were potentially involved in the incident in terms of investigators or victims. In contrast, the tragedy of QZ8501 which occurred in Asia involved only half the total number of passengers as in the MH370 and MH17 air incidents. These facts may have led UK students to be more aware of the MH370 and MH17 events than the crash of flight QZ8501. The lack of responsiveness among UK university students concerning the QZ8501 tragedy could prevent them from answering the questionnaire. Therefore, this tragedy was ultimately excluded from the present study.

4.5.2 The final pilot test

The principal aim of the final pilot test is to generate meaningful characteristics in the stimulus material for use later in the main study. It is believed to be of great importance to provide features which are salient to the participants to aid in their understanding of the topic of the questionnaire. In other words, it is important to collect feedback with regard to how the stimulus material works and to determine whether or not it fulfils the purpose for which it was designed. Therefore, a second pilot test was

carried out to find if the stimulus material was difficult for the participants to respond to.

Data were gathered from convenience samples of students attending universities in the UK and Malaysia. The UK students numbered 14 in total from Northumbria University. The collection of data from the UK participants was carried out using a face-to-face questionnaire, whereas, the Malaysian data was gathered with the assistance of academics from the university there, and the sample consisted of 15 Malaysian students. In this pilot study, two different stimulus materials (MH370 and MH17 diagrams) were designed and tested. Both contained the same stimuli, including background information about the tragedies (e.g. the date of occurrence), flight schedules (e.g. departure and destination) and consequences (e.g. disappearance, shot down). The information was printed on A4 paper. Moreover, different colours were used to represent the tragedies to aid the better reception of the information. For instance, blue fonts and columns were used for the MH370 stimulus, while red represented the MH17 crisis. A general image of the aircraft was shown on the diagrams to emphasise the accidents.

During the pilot test, the UK participants relied almost exclusively on the stimulus materials to provide answers to the questions. Observation indicated that the UK students, who experienced the sufferings from a distance, may not have been fully familiar with the tragedies. Hence, the stimuli materials were found to be useful, helping them to establish a clear focus on the tragedies and to provide sufficient answers to the questions. Even though the Malaysian students could easily describe the air tragedies without much difficulty, they still found the stimulus materials useful to prompt their memories about the tragedies which occurred a few years ago.

4.5.3 Lesson learnt from the pilot tests

The pilot tests provided a great deal of useful information with regard to the reliability, validity and practicability of the research instruments. Following their completion, a number of changes were made to the coverage of the air tragedies and the methodology. Firstly, following responses given by the UK university students, the third airline crisis of flight QZ8501 was removed from the study to ensure greater comprehensibility for participants recruited for the main study. Secondly, in light of the apparent difficulty among the UK participants in defining the tragedies, the background information was presented following the sequence of the real events (e.g.

1, 2, 3...) to guide the participants through what happened in the incidents. However, the information was kept simple and short to prevent the participants from being overloaded with information and imagery. Furthermore, the size of the materials was enlarged from A4 to A3 for better visual effect.

4.6 Procedure

Data collection for the main attitudes study was undertaken in the UK and Malaysia from April to June 2017. In the UK, the data was collected in person by the researcher from students from Northumbria University. The data were gathered on the basis of convenience, where potential participants were approached by the researcher at various locations on campus. In Malaysia, data collection was undertaken with the assistance of academics from Tunku Abdul Rahman University (UTAR).

The procedure employed in each data collection session was standardised for both the UK and Malaysia. At the beginning, the researcher approached students and asked if they were willing to take part in the survey regarding the Malaysia Airlines tragedies. Further information about the study was not given to the participants. The procedure followed the recommendations of Garrett et al. (2006: 397), who stated that not informing the participants about the background of the study in advance could prevent them from giving keywords that they believed would be most socially appropriate and desirable in the context. In the present study, the participants were informed that their responses would not be evaluated individually but collectively, and in addition that their responses would be completely anonymous and they were free to give their comments concerning the tragedies. This statement was made to avoid social desirability bias among the participants, which refers to the tendency of the participants to provide answers to the questions that they believe are more appropriate (McKenzie, 2010: 43) and which make them look good (Garrett, 2010: 44).

Moreover, the researcher also encouraged participants to write down spontaneously the words that came to mind by explaining that there were no bad or wrong answers to the questions. The participants were required to give short responses rather than long comments to aid the classification of data into semantic categories in the stage of data analysis. The procedure for each section of the research instrument is detailed below:

Section 1: Questionnaire

- i) The instrument allow the students to write down their answers.

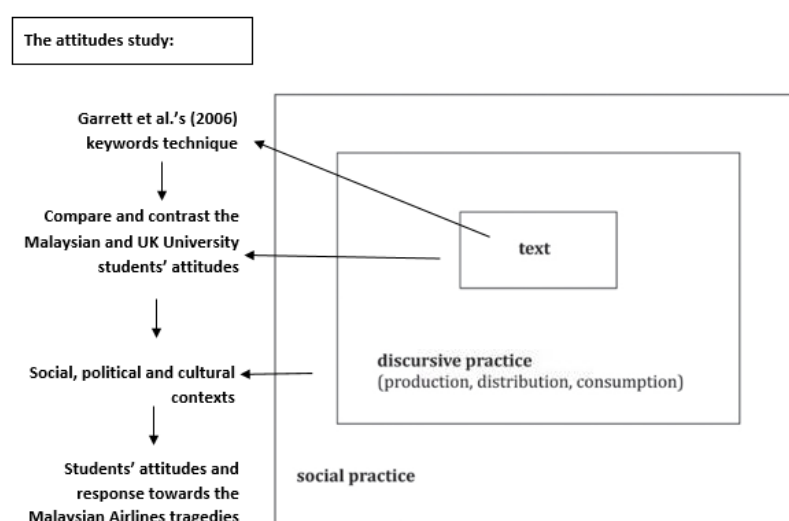
Section 2: MH370 and MH17 diagrams

- i) The diagrams were given to the students as an option to aid their understanding to the tragedies.

4.6.1 Data processing and analysis

In accordance with the corpus-based discourse analysis adopted in this study, Fairclough's three-dimensional model is again used to interpret the keyword data for the students' attitudes towards the air tragedies. This framework is summarised in Figure 4.8. Based on the model, the first stage of textual analysis involved identification of relatively discrete ideas expressed by each keyword. Subsequently, keywords that shared similar ideas and meanings were clustered into the same semantic category. The number of words appearing in each of the categories was then calculated as a percentage of that total, in order to allow broad descriptive quantitative comparisons to be made across the data and the two groups of participants. The analysis was conducted with the aim to establish a balance between the keywords obtained in the corpus-based discourse analysis and those provided by the participants in the attitudes study.

Figure 4.8. Framework for the combination of Fairclough's (1992: 73) three dimensional model and the attitudes study



In the analysis, some keywords such as '*murder*' and '*weapon*', can be easily labelled as negative. Nevertheless, some comments, such as '*politics*', contain potential ambiguity. The word '*politics*' could be used as a negative label by to indicate political dominance over the people. At the same time, it can also be employed to express a more neutral value, indicating the importance of political action to manage the disasters. In this case, Garrett et al. (2005: 47) asserted that it is important to go back to the original questionnaire to check the other keywords the item is found alongside, to determine if there is a clear sense of negativity or positivity that pervades the accompanying items. For example, if '*politics*' is found alongside items such as '*mismanagement*' and '*upset*' on one questionnaire, the keyword can arguably be interpreted as having a more negative value.

The second stage of the analysis consists of Krippendorff's (2013) content analysis of thematic distinctions. At this stage, comments given by the Malaysian and UK students are compared and contrasted to identify their attitudes towards the two air tragedies. In the final stage of this analysis, Kyriakidou's (2015) four types of 'media witnessing' – affective, ecstatic, politicised witnessing and detached witnessing – were used to generate provisional conclusions regarding the students' attitudes towards the suffering in a social context. Affective witnessing refers to intense emotional engagement among audiences with human pain. Ecstatic witnessing comprises the construction of audiences as themselves virtually present at the scene of suffering through the frequent use of temporal deixis such as 'at that moment'. In politicised witnessing, there is a search for causes and the attribution of blame and political responsibility for the event concerned. Detached witnessing describes the suffering of others as something irrelevant to the audiences' everyday life. These four types of media witnessing allow for the exploration of the students' attitudes towards the air tragedies that go beyond expressions of compassion and pity.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has described in detail the research approaches used in the corpus-based discourse analysis and the attitudes study. The various data collection procedures as well as explanations for their selection were also covered in this chapter. Moreover, two pilot tests were conducted and discussed in addition to an explanation of the lessons learned from the pilot tests. This is followed by the actions taken to improve the methodological quality of the present study. The following chapter presents and discusses the preliminary results of the corpus-based discourse

analysis, focusing on the construction of the two air crises in the selected Malaysian and UK newspapers.

Notes:

1. ABYZ News Links. The list of Malaysian English Newspapers was adapted from Malaysia Newspaper and News Media Guide. *Malaysia Newspapers and News Media Guide*. (2016, April 20). Available at <http://www.abyznewslinks.com/malay.htm>
2. The circulation of the Malaysian newspapers was gathered from the reports provided by Audit Bureau of Circulations Malaysia. (2016, April 20). Available at <http://abcm.org.my/reports/archives/>
3. The background information of the Malaysian National News Agency or BERNAMA was taken from the company website. (2016, April 22). Available at <http://www.bernama.com.my/aboutbernama/bi/about-bernama.htm>
4. The list of the British Newspapers was adapted from National Readership Survey. (2016, April 22). Available at http://www.nrs.co.uk/downloads/padd-files/pdf/nrs_padd_jan_dec14_newsbrands.pdf
5. The background information about The Daily Telegraph was gathered from the Encyclopædia Britannica. (2016, April 22). Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Daily-Telegraph>
6. The achievements of The Guardian was obtained from the official website. (2016, April 22). Available at: - <http://www.theguardian.com/gnm-press-office/awards>
7. The date restriction of the data collection of MH370 was based on an overview provided by BBC News Asia. (2016, May 12). Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-26503141>
The date restriction of the data collection of MH17 was based on an overview provided by ABC. (2016, May 12). Available at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-17/mh17-anniversary:-timeline-of-events-and-international-reactions/6623678>
8. Introduction to Tunku Abdul Rahman University (Utar). (2017, January 8). Available at http://www.utar.edu.my/econtent_sub.jsp?fcid=1&fcontentid=8324

Chapter Five: Result One: Newspapers analysis

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed description of the research approaches and framework employed in this study. Moreover, justifications of the selection of the methods and concepts were discussed. This chapter now seeks to answer the following research question:

1. (a) How were keywords used to represent the disappearance of the Flight MH370 and what does this reveal about differences and similarities in media reporting about the flight in the two countries?
(b): How were keywords used to represent the shooting down of the Flight MH17 and what does this reveal about differences and similarities in media reporting about the flight in the two countries?

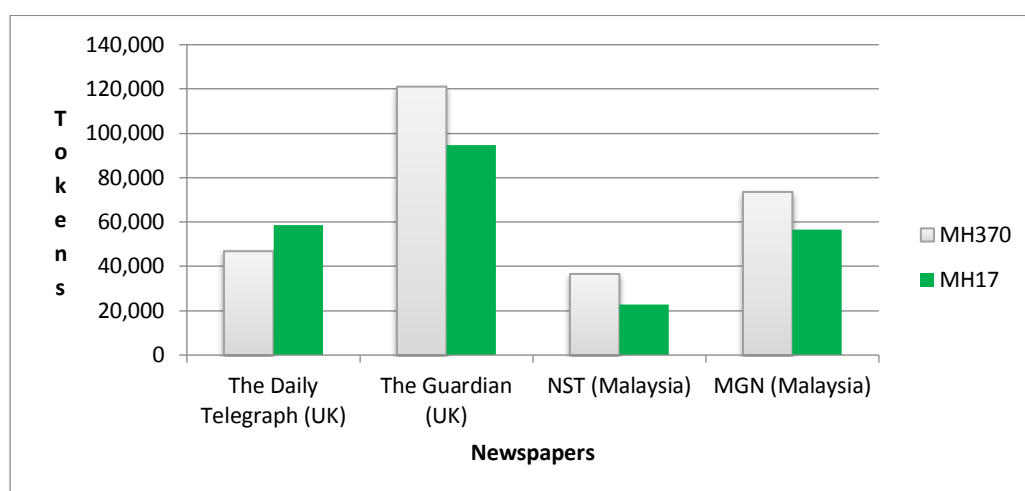
In chapter 5, the results of the study based on the chosen corpora are presented. Firstly, an outline of the press coverage of the tragedies and an overview of the statistical techniques used in the analyses are given. Before moving into an in depth analysis, it is crucial to first understand the basic features of each corpus. This is to ensure that the two corpora were consistent in their physical features so as to give a fairer comparison. Additionally, it can also ensure that any differences discovered later would be attributed to factors other than these. Therefore, the section starts with a discussion of the newspaper coverage of MH370 and MH17 in which the tokens found, distribution of articles on a monthly basis and various statistical characteristics of the corpora are compared. Secondly, having given outlines of the newspapers and the techniques used, the chapter then presents the outcomes of the analyses of the data collected from the newspapers. In order to avoid confusion between the tragedies of MH370 and MH17, the results and discussion of each tragedy are presented separately in two different sections.

5.2 Newspapers coverage of the tragedies of MH370 and MH17

The volume of data in the present study is quite small because the incidents of MH370 and MH17 are rather specific. However, the data can be considered salient for the analysis as it represents a relatively new area social of inquiry. Figure 5.1 shows details of the corpus used in this study, comprising 785 articles from the four chosen newspapers which contain 511,009 tokens.

The corpus is divided into two main sections, each based on one of the tragedies. Firstly, news of the MH370 tragedy comprises a total of 413 news articles (198 from the UK and 215 from Malaysia) and 278,123 tokens. The second section is news of the MH17 tragedy, which includes 372 news articles (186 from each country) with a total of 232,886 tokens.

Figure 5.1 The Malaysian and UK news corpus based on tokens and tragedies



Overall, from the data collected it can be that slightly more news was published concerning the MH370 tragedy compared to that of MH17. In other words, publicity for shooting down of MH17, which happened a few months after the first incident, is observed to be slightly slimmer. Potential reasons for this finding could be related to the intensity of the disaster severity; that is, how abnormally severe the disaster was. As indicated by Yan & Bissell (2015), the intensity of deviance (such as its unusual nature) was found to be one of the main factors determining the coverage of disasters in US newspapers. Therefore, Yan & Bissell claimed that 'abnormally' severe disasters received proportionally more media attention than 'normally' severe disasters. In this case, the mysterious disappearance of MH370, the cause of which could not be definitively determined, suggests a higher 'abnormality' in contrast to the shooting down of flight MH17 which clearly occurred as an example of human-made disaster. This helps to explain the higher news coverage of the tragedy of MH370 compared to that of MH17. To give a better picture of the news coverage of the two air disasters, the following section includes a further breakdown of the news articles in each newspaper on a monthly basis. The distribution of news articles over the collection period is shown in figures 5.2 and 5.3.

Figure 5.2 Number of news articles on the tragedy of MH370 (from March 2014 to July 2015) in four newspapers

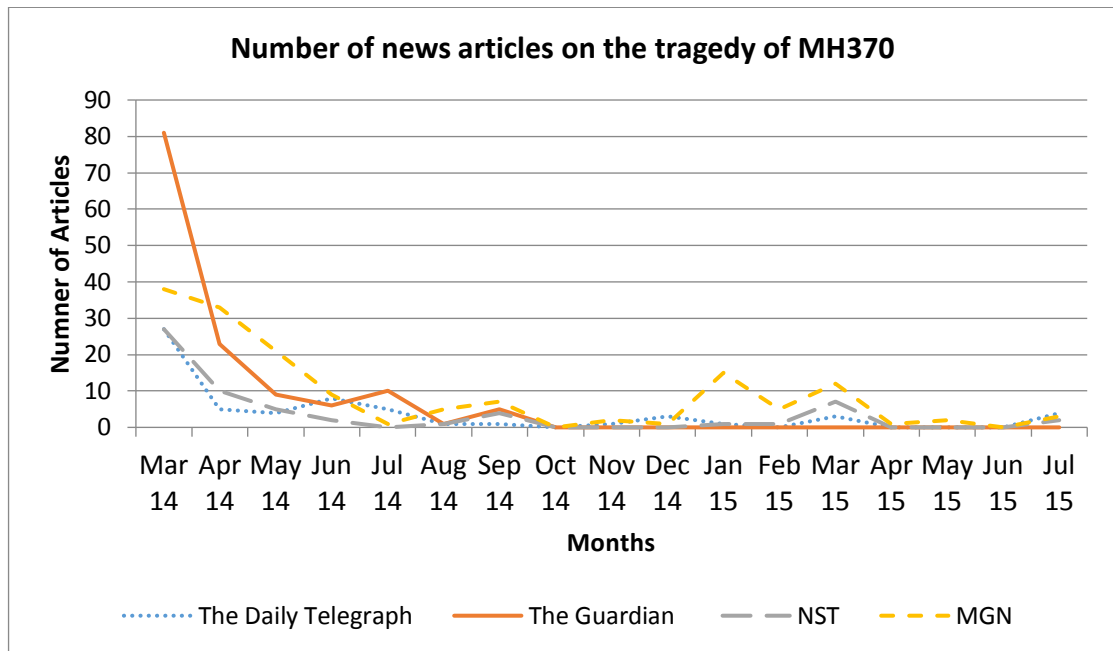
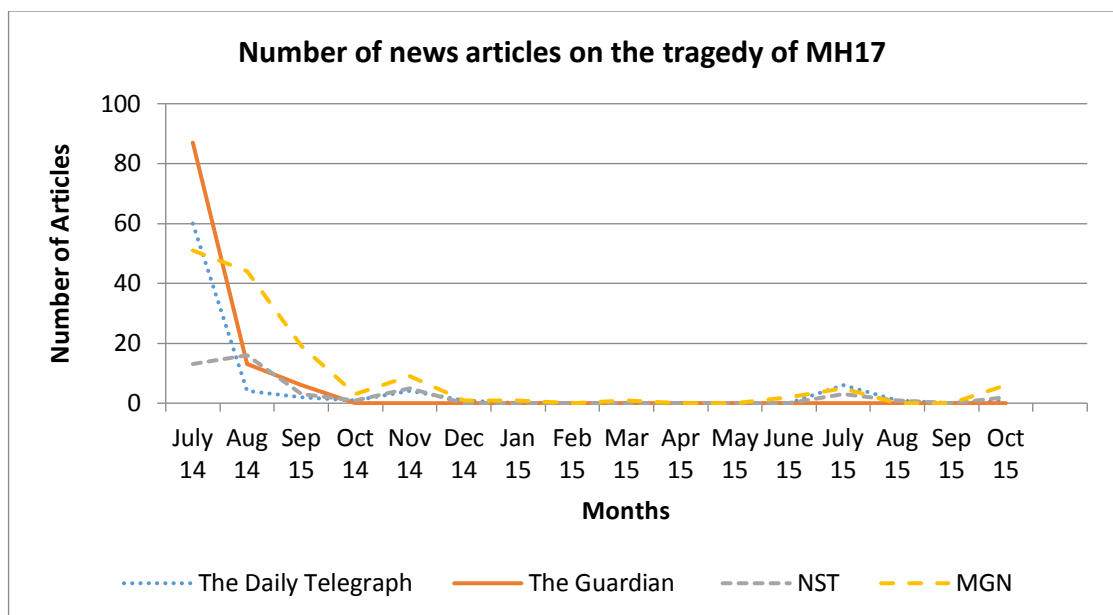


Figure 5.3 Number of news articles on the tragedy of MH17 (from July 2014 to October 2015) for four newspapers



Referring to figure 5.2, one can see that most of the news articles were published in March 2014. The number of news reports then dropped rapidly in April 2014. Since the tragedy occurred on 8th March 2014, it seems natural that the greatest concern over the fate of the aircraft and the victims peaked in March 2014 across all of the newspapers. Numbers of publications about the tragedy subsequently remained low throughout the rest of the period but increased in January 2015 when Malaysia

officially declared the disappearance of flight MH370 as an accident and its passengers and crew were presumed dead. The second marginal rise occurred on the anniversary of the disappearance in March 2015, covering mainly news regarding memorials to the victims and reviews of the incident.

In the case of the MH17 tragedy, as shown in figure 5.3, the same pattern of distribution of news reports is also observed. The articles were mostly published in July 2014 as the Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was shot down on 17 July. The rate of publication then fell away in the following months. The flatness of the curve during the period December 2014 to June 2015 reflects a relative lack of coverage of MH17. This could be due to the prolonged investigation of the shooting down of the aircraft. At the end of the sampling period, the final official incident report on MH17 had yet to be published. In fact, the report was expected to be released in mid-2015. Presumably a lack of evidence concerning the air disaster could have contributed to the low publication rates during these months. In addition, some other major issues such as the West African Ebola virus epidemic, the Israel–Gaza conflict and Russian military intervention in Ukraine that occurred in the same year would have resulted in a decreased focus on the Malaysian Airlines tragedies. As in the previous chart, a modest increase in reports was observed on the first anniversary of the MH17 incident in July 2015.

Overall, all four newspapers revealed very similarity patterns in the distribution of news articles across the respective periods. In other words, all newspapers showed consistency in the publication of news about the two tragedies. It should be acknowledged that the influence of traditional newspapers has declined due to the growing availability of information through multiple devices such as mobile phones (Greenslade, 2009) and a move towards online news consumption through political blogs and social media sites such as Twitter (Baker et al., 2013: 256). In order to catch up or maintain competitiveness, newspapers have started to engage with new digital technologies (e.g. online news and mobile phone news apps). Thus, Baker et al. (2013) claimed that the transformation of the news into digital forms suggests that newspapers continue to be influential and their audiences now include international readers. Having acknowledged the monthly coverage of the news articles in the present study, the following section presents descriptive statistics of each corpus.

5.3 Descriptive statistics of the news corpus

The cleaned texts were analysed using Sketch engine. All news articles were read carefully and analyses of the keywords and collocations were undertaken. In order to compare the features of the corpora, the tokens, sentences and word length were analysed as demonstrated in table 5.1 and 5.2.

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics on the corpora – MH370 (N=413)

| | Malaysian News Corpus (n= 215) | UK News Corpus (n=198) |
|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Instances of “MH370” | 1,609 | 834 |
| Number of Articles | 215 | 198 |
| Tokens | 110,169 | 167,954 |
| Mean Tokens Per Article | 512 | 848 |
| Sentences | 3,336 | 5,883 |
| Mean Tokens Per Sentence | 33 | 29 |
| Mean Sentences Per Article | 16 | 30 |

Table 5.2 Descriptive statistics on the corpora – MH17 (N= 372)

| | Malaysian News Corpus (n= 186) | UK News Corpus (n= 186) |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Instances of “MH17” | 1,191 | 636 |
| Number of Articles | 186 | 186 |
| Tokens | 79,485 | 153,401 |
| Mean Tokens Per Article | 427 | 825 |
| Sentences | 2,360 | 5,627 |
| Mean Tokens Per Sentence | 34 | 27 |
| Mean Sentences Per Article | 13 | 30 |

Table 5.1 shows that the search in the Malaysian corpus returned 1,609 instances of ‘MH370’. The overall number of tokens for the Malaysian news corpus is 110,169

tokens, indicating one instance of 'MH370' in every 68 words. On average, in the UK news corpus of 167,954 tokens, one instance of 'MH370' appeared for every 201 words. On the other hand, table 5.2 shows that instances of 'MH17' occurred in every 67 words of a total of 79,485 tokens in the Malaysian news corpus. In the UK news corpus, there is total of 153,401 tokens and instance 'MH17' appeared once in every 241 words. The results indicate that the terms 'MH370' and 'MH17' were mentioned more frequently in Malaysian compared to UK newspapers.

It was also observed that the UK news corpus has fewer articles but higher word counts compared to the Malaysian corpus, implying that the news articles in the UK newspapers are relatively longer. This can also be seen in the average number of tokens per articles. For instance, in the tragedy of MH370, the UK news corpus contained an average of 848 words per article whereas in the Malaysian news corpus only 512 words per article. With regards to the news of the shooting down of flight MH17, the UK news corpus also demonstrated a higher number of 825 words per articles compared to only 425 words per article in the Malaysian corpus. In a similar vein, the UK news corpus has greater numbers of sentences (5,583 for MH370; 5,627 for MH17) in contrast to the Malaysian news corpus (3,336 for MH370; 2,360 for MH17). Considering the differing numbers of articles across the corpora, the average numbers of sentences per article was calculated. In the UK corpus, there were 29 sentences per article for the MH370 tragedy and 27 for MH17. Conversely, the Malaysian corpora contained 16 sentences per article for the MH370 tragedy and 13 for MH17. These statistics reveal that the higher numbers of articles in the Malaysian news corpora contained fewer words and sentences, resulting in shorter article length as emphasised above. This finding suggests that the UK news media potentially covered more information or more detailed explanations of the tragedies compared to in Malaysia. However, in order to support this finding based on more than mere word counts, a more in-depth analysis was conducted and in the following sections the lexical choices of the two corpora are considered.

5.4 A general description of the keyword list of MH370

The previous section displayed the newspaper coverage of the tragedies of MH370 and MH17 based on word count and numbers of articles, tokens and sentences. The distribution of articles on a monthly basis was also discussed. The definition of keywords discussed in this section is not based on subjective views on importance in culture but on the concept of keyness, where any word in a corpus can be regarded

as ‘key’ if it occurs frequently enough when compared to a reference corpus. In the present study, the Malaysian and UK news corpora were compared against the BNC (as the reference corpus) using Sketch Engine to gain an indication of the distinctive lexis in each corpus. In this case, the top 50 most frequent keywords obtained from the data were examined.

Table 5.3. The most frequent keywords of ‘MH370’ in the Malaysian and UK news corpus (see Appendix 1 for a complete set of keywords data)

| Malaysian news corpus | | | | UK news corpus | | |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| | Keywords | Frequency | Keyness | Keywords | Frequency | Keyness |
| 1 | MH370 | 1,609 | 147.0 | MH370 | 834 | 50.7 |
| 2 | Malaysia | 542 | 47.6 | plane | 859 | 40.3 |
| 3 | search | 681 | 39.3 | flight | 854 | 37.2 |
| 4 | MAS | 352 | 32.1 | Malaysia | 633 | 36.7 |
| 5 | aircraft | 486 | 29.9 | Malaysian | 522 | 31.4 |
| 6 | passengers | 386 | 29.8 | Airlines | 443 | 26.5 |
| 7 | Flight | 327 | 29.3 | search | 681 | 26.0 |
| 8 | Ocean | 312 | 27.6 | passengers | 362 | 18.6 |
| 9 | Malaysian | 287 | 26.5 | aircraft | 432 | 17.7 |
| 10 | flight | 388 | 26.0 | Ocean | 286 | 16.9 |

Table 5.3 shows that the term ‘MH370’ was the most frequent keyword used in the Malaysian and UK newspapers. Moreover, ‘MH370’ occurs with very high frequency in both corpora, suggesting that this term was very important in the news reporting of the air tragedy. Given that MH370 is a term or name referring specifically to the flight, it is perhaps not surprising to find that it appeared as the top keyword when the target corpora were compared to a general corpus. Similar to the results obtained in section 5.2, the Malaysian journalists used ‘MH370’ almost three times more frequently (1,609) than UK journalists (834). In order to further clarify this finding, an analysis of the collocates of ‘MH370’ was carried out. As the focus of the present study is on keywords, collocation analysis is used as an exploratory tool to identify the usage of the term ‘MH370’ in the news articles. For this reason, the researcher decided not to extend the collocation analysis and provides only the top 10 collocates for each corpus. In addition, a span of five words each to the left and right of ‘MH370’ was chosen.

Table 5.4: Most frequent collocates of 'MH370'

| Malaysian News corpus | | | | UK News corpus | | |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------------|-----------|----------|
| | Collocates | Frequency | logDice | Collocates | Frequency | logDice |
| 1 | Flight | 320 | 12.40232 | flight | 266 | 12.31297 |
| 2 | of | 465 | 11.84742 | Flight | 104 | 11.74334 |
| 3 | flight | 217 | 11.79721 | Airlines | 119 | 11.54830 |
| 4 | for | 254 | 11.69177 | Malaysia | 116 | 11.31495 |
| 5 | the | 817 | 11.63682 | missing | 89 | 11.21129 |
| 6 | Airlines | 182 | 11.63666 | disappearance | 65 | 11.02943 |
| 7 | on | 254 | 11.52721 | on | 149 | 10.90969 |
| 8 | that | 231 | 11.42444 | for | 117 | 10.87177 |
| 9 | search | 180 | 11.33009 | of | 249 | 10.74994 |
| 10 | in | 235 | 11.23176 | after | 65 | 10.62362 |

The findings shown in table 5.4 give an indication that the use of 'MH370' differed between the two corpora. In the UK corpus, 'MH370' was associated more frequently with nouns (such as 'flight', 'Airlines', 'Malaysia', 'disappearance'), and forming the noun phrase: 'Malaysia Airlines flight MH370' and 'disappearance of MH370'. On the other hand, in the Malaysian news corpus 'MH370' was strongly associated with grammatical terms: 'of MH370', 'for MH370', 'the MH370', 'on MH370', 'that MH370' and 'MH370 in'. This is interesting because, according to Baker (2006: 100), grammatical terms can be an indicative of particular discourses. In general, the preposition 'of' often occurs with nouns and denote a measure or an attribute (Sinclair, 1991). In order to see what attributes are frequently associated with 'MH370', the most frequent collocates appearing to the left of the pattern of 'of MH370' were examined through concordance analysis. The results showed that most of the collocates were related to the victims involved in the tragedy, such as the '*next-of-kin of Flight MH370*', '*family members of passengers in the missing MH370*', '*the pilot of the missing MH370*', '*relatives of those on board MH370*', '*passengers and crew of MH370*'. This finding points to a strong victimisation discourse surrounding 'MH370'.

The examination of 'for MH370' indicated that the most frequent collocates to the left of the pattern were 'in', 'search' and 'flight', hence forming the phrase '*in the search for MH370*'. This pattern could suggest a greater emphasis on efforts to solve the mystery of the missing flight. Another interesting pattern was 'that MH370'. The concordance analysis shows that most of the collocates to the left of the word 'that' in the pattern were synonymous verbs indicating speech such as 'said', 'summarised', 'indicated', 'announced', 'concluded' and 'ensure'. This suggests that MH370 was likely to be reported through the voices of government-related authorities or ministers, which is further explored in section 5.4.1.

The collocation and concordance analysis above help to explain the different results obtained from the Malaysian and UK newspapers. As one can see, in the UK newspapers '*MH370*' was used mainly to refer to the aircraft as '*Malaysia Airlines flight MH370*', whereas in the Malaysian newspapers '*MH370*' was used in a variety of ways and was associated frequently with the victims and the search operation as well as speeches from the authorities. All this evidence helps to explain the higher frequency of '*MH370*' in the Malaysian newspapers. In addition, the importance of identity and formality in the Malaysian news reporting is also revealed, as is evident in the examples above in which most of the issues and people related to the tragedy were described with the term '*MH370*'.

The researcher then examined the 50 most frequent keywords in the two news corpora, in order to capture the most frequent topics and issues discussed in the newspapers relating to the air tragedy. These keywords were subsequently categorised into different semantic categories or topics. Since some words could belong to more than one semantic category, their use in context was carefully examined by looking at concordance lines. Overall, eight different categories were identified as shown in figure 5.4, and the categories are examined in detail in figure 5.5.

Figure 5.4 Identified semantic categories/topics for MH370 (BNC as reference corpus)

| Semantic category/topic | Malaysian news corpora | UK news corpora |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Aircraft related terms | aircraft, flight, Airlines, radar, SAR, plane, satellite, Flight, board, Aviation, MH370, MAS, Boeing, Airport | plane, flight, Airlines, aircraft, radar, satellite, plane's, debris, wreckage, Flight, passports, board, airline, aviation, data, MH370, Inmarsat, Boeing, cockpit |
| Names / title | Hishammuddin, Najib, Razak, Datuk, Seri, Tun, Prime, | Hishammuddin |
| Social actors | passengers, crew, families, Transport, Minister | passengers, minister, crew, relatives, investigators, families, officials, authorities, pilots |
| Nationality / country | Malaysian, Australian, Indian, Chinese, Malaysia, China, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, KL, Australia, International | Malaysia, Malaysian, Malaysia's, Indian, Chinese, Australian, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing, China |
| Actions | search, investigation, disappeared, ended, operation | search, crashed, crash, disappeared, vanished |
| Consequences | missing, disappearance | missing, disappearance |
| Natures | Ocean, Sea, Air | Ocean, ocean, air |
| Time/location | Southern, March | southern |

Figure 5.5. Description of semantic categories/topics related to MH370

| Semantic category/ topic | Description |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 Aircraft related terms | References to aircraft-related matters, including physical objects, equipment, operations and Airlines. |
| 2 Name / title | Personal names of politicians, authority figures and officers. Honorific titles are also included. |
| 3 Social actors | General terms concerning individuals or collectives in terms of their social roles, such as occupation, position, gender and relationship. |
| 4 Country / nationality | References to a country or a collective entity in terms of nationality and region. |
| 5 Action | Action verbs related to the investigation, flight operation and destruction. |
| 6 Consequences | Words related to the results and effects of the tragedy. |
| 7 Nature | Terms relating to phenomena in the physical world, such as air and ocean. |
| 8 Time/ location | Words pertaining to the time, date and location of the accident. |

The topics covered show that there is a high similarity of keywords used in both the Malaysian and the UK news corpora in contrast to the BNC. The top keywords in both corpora were mostly related to the aircraft, social actors, national identity, country, action and location (see figure 5.4 for examples). One observation which can be made is that these keywords were used more frequently in the news reports of tragedy compared to a general context, which may indicate that these lexical items were important to the news construction of the MH370 tragedy. For a more in-depth analysis of the keywords in the news corpora, the number of keywords appearing in each semantic category was worked out and described as a percentage of the total in table 5.5) and represented in a bar chart in figure 5.6. The numbers and percentage of categories/topics are taken into account and discussed in detail in the following section.

Table 5.5 (Numbers) and percentages of total keywords by Malaysian and UK newspapers in each semantic category/topics (percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole)

| Keywords of MH370 | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Malaysia | UK |
| Semantics category | Keywords: n=50 | Keywords: n=50 |
| Aircraft Related Matters | (14) 28% | (19) 38% |
| Name / Titles | (7) 14% | (1) 2% |
| Social actors | (5) 10% | (9) 18% |
| Nationality / Country | (12) 24% | (10) 20% |
| Actions | (5) 10% | (5) 10% |
| Consequences | (2) 4% | (2) 4% |
| Nature | (3) 6% | (3) 6% |
| Time/location | (2) 4% | (1) 2% |

Figure 5.6 Percentage distribution of semantic categories/topics of MH370 from the Malaysian and UK newspapers

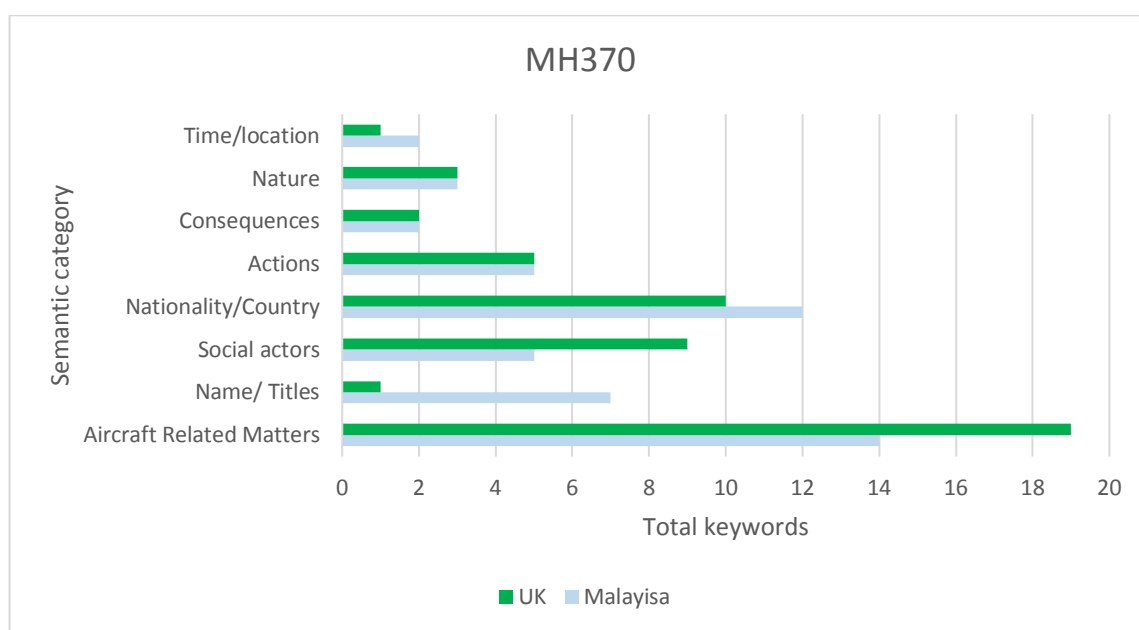


Table 5.5 and figure 5.6 show the numbers and percentages of keywords in each category. The two most salient topics were those presenting MH370 in relation to aircraft-related matters (Malaysia 28%, UK 38%) and nationality/country (Malaysia 24%, UK 20%). The category of social actors (Malaysia 10%, UK 18%) was the third most salient followed by names and titles (Malaysia 14%, UK 2%). The percentage

of the 'actions' (Malaysia 10%, UK 10%), 'consequences' (Malaysia 4%, UK 4%) and 'nature' (Malaysia 6%, UK 6%) categories were similar between the two corpora, indicating the consistency of news reporting in relation to these topics. The percentage of the 'time/location' category was fairly low in both news corpora (Malaysia 4%, UK 2%). This quantitative analysis has given a view of the general trends in the data; however, the research would not be complete without a more detailed examination of the semantic categories. Therefore, the next section considers the eight semantic categories separately. Based on the data, different topics were identified from the categories.

5.4.1 A general discussion of the semantic categories/topics of MH370

Aircraft related matters: (General vs. Thorough)

Taking the BNC as the reference corpus, the Malaysian and UK news corpora contained broadly the same keywords. For instance, both corpora utilised a range of words to depict the airplane (e.g. 'plane', 'flight', 'aircraft') and objects related to it (e.g. 'Airlines', 'radar', 'satellite', 'board', 'aviation'). Undoubtedly, this topic was the largest category (Malaysia 28%, UK 38%), accounting for nearly half of the total keywords in the two news corpora. Therefore, it can be argued that the news framing of MH370 in the two news media focused largely on aircraft-related matters. In addition, the UK news media utilised slightly more keywords in this category compared to the Malaysian news media. The keywords included the words 'debris', 'wreckage', 'passport', 'data', 'Inmarsat' and 'cockpit'. The concordance analysis revealed that 'wreckage' and 'debris' were used to indicate the remains of the airplane as a sign or clue to the fate of the airplane (as shown in concordance 1 below). Due to word limits, only a small set of concordance lines are randomly selected and presented in the analysis here, and it should be noted that some additional words which are associated with the topic are highlighted in bold.

Concordance 1 (UK news corpus):

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>the plane crashed, there should be lots of Beijing. 77 MH370 searchers draw blank in for wreckage in the Indian Ocean, said the Singapore and Vietnam began looking for</p> | <p>wreckage wreckage debris debris</p> | <p>. But for MH370, you can't find anything hunt: Debris may have drifted hundreds was a "major lead" and could help to end or wreckage off Vietnam. China and</p> |
|--|--|---|

In the UK news corpus, the term '*passport*', which generally refers to an official document used when travelling to foreign countries, was largely associated with crime in the news articles, as revealed in concordance 2:

Concordance 2 (UK news corpus):

passengers boarded the aircraft with **fake passports** under the guise of an Italian and Austrian connected to the two passengers who used **false passports** , was merely speculative. The court, during disclosed that the two men travelling on **stolen passports** were Iranian nationals Pouria Nour Mohammad

As one can see, words that denote criminality such as '*fake*', '*false*' and '*stolen*' were used to describe '*passports*'. It is pertinent to mention that MH370 was once suspected to be a terrorist incident due to the presence of two Iranians on flight MH370 who held fake passports. However, the Malaysian national police then refuted the rumour, claiming that the two men had bought fake passports in order to migrate to Germany and Denmark, and thus they were not linked to terrorism. Arguably, the UK journalists provided more detailed explanations of all potential causes of the flight being missing. This proposition is further reinforced by the use of specific aircraft-related terms such as '*cockpit*' and '*Inmarsat*'. Some of the examples are revealed in concordance 3.

Concordance 3 (UK news corpus):

between the air traffic controller and the **cockpit** is at 01:19 (Malaysian time) and is 'Goodnight MH370, climbing to flight altitude 350 The **cockpit** is given clearance to ascend to 35,000 to help locate aircraft flight data and **cockpit** voice recorders. The Australian prime minister aircraft. The day after MH370 disappeared, **Inmarsat began** calculating the aircraft's movements apparently to prevent any more such delays, **Inmarsat was officially made** "technical adviser" several days. Further painstaking analysis by **Inmarsat has now** pinpointed the area where the plane

Based on concordance 3, '*cockpit*' was frequently used in tracing the history of communication between the pilot and the air traffic controllers, seemingly to identify any problems that may have occurred before the accident. Given that the airplane cockpit generally contains flight instruments in conjunction with all the controls that enable the pilot to fly the aircraft, it seems reasonable that the UK news media were concerned about issues surrounding the flight desk before the disappearance. In terms of the investigation team, the UK news media made regular reference to '*Inmarsat*', a British satellite telecommunications company that helped to flight MH370. As we can see from the examples given in concordance 3, a detailed

description of investigation process was provided. The phrases: *'began'*, *'was officially made'* and *'has now'* are likely to imply the sequence of search operations, which in turn highlights the broadcasting of up-to-date information at all times. One of the possible explanations for this result was that the proximity between the company and the news organisations may have substantially impacted on the number of references to and coverage of the company. As indicated in previous studies (e.g. van Belle, 2000; Hanusch, 2008; Joye, 2010), an event's proximity to news producers will increase its chance of selection. Therefore, we might tentatively infer that the high coverage of *'Inmarsat'* in the British newspapers in comparison to the Malaysian newspapers is in some way linked to geographical proximity.

In the Malaysian news corpus, a different result was observed. Instead of *'cockpit'*, the Malaysian news journalists were more concerned about the *'airport'*. Looking closely at the concordance lines, *'airport'* was used prominently to describe the flight's departure (e.g. *'KL international Airport'*) and arrival destinations (*'Beijing Capital International Airport'*) (see concordance 4).

Concordance 4 (Malaysian news corpus):

nationals and 12 crew, left the **KL International Airport** at 12.41 am on March 8 and disappeared
 arrive at **Beijing Capital International Airport** 7.24am: MAS issues first statement that
 to **gather** at Kuala Lumpur International **Airport** . (KLIA). Travel arrangements and expenses
 bringing a **shaman** to Kuala Lumpur International **Airport** . This follows reports about a shaman conducting

Concordance 4 shows that the Malaysian news media focused largely on the schedule of the flight, which is assumed to be part of an introduction to and emphasis on the identity of MH370. Indeed, the information was repeated frequently in the news articles, again showing the importance of identity and formality in the news reporting. Furthermore, events and spiritual ceremonies taking place at the Kuala Lumpur International airport were also mentioned in the newspapers. In respect of the investigation, the Malaysian news media provided greater coverage of the *'SAR'* (Search and Rescue) operation rather than *'Inmarsat'*. In general, the SAR team consisted of personnel from Australia, US, China, Indonesia, and India, among other countries. Based on the concordance analysis, SAR was described in relation to the search operation. Some of the examples are shown in concordance 5:

Concordance 5 (Malaysian news corpus):

countries are involved in the search. **Najib said** SAR ended its operations in the South China southwest of Perth. - **Hishammuddin said** the SAR operation continued despite the Australian hat the **government** will do its best in the SAR operation. March 13, 2014 Acting Transport deliberately flown towards Antarctica. Feb 25, 2015 SAR for MH370 has covered over 24,000 square general satisfaction with the **Malaysian-led** SAR operation. He said Malaysia was assured said the US would continue to assist in the SAR operation," **Muhyiddin told** Malaysian journalists

As we can see from concordance 5, SAR was largely reported through the voice of Malaysian ministers such as ‘*Najib said*’ (the then Prime Minister), ‘*Hishammuddin said*’ (transportation minister) and ‘*Muhyiddin told*’ (deputy Prime Minister) which could imply a strong political involvement in the SAR operation. The results could also indicate the dominant frames of domestic issues in relation to the SAR operation.

Overall, for the topic of aircraft-related matters, the findings show that the UK news media paid greater attention to details, from ‘*cockpit*’ to ‘*wreckage*’, seemingly in trying to solve the mystery of the missing flight. Conversely, the coverage of aircraft-related matters was rather general in Malaysian newspapers, with stories merely having a local focus. In fact, issues surrounding the cockpit, passports and wreckage were largely absent in this news corpus. Two tentative conclusions can be drawn from the findings above. Firstly, geographical proximity is likely to affect the focus and framing of the reporting, where both the Malaysian and UK news media tended to make more reference to local sources. Secondly, the UK news provided more in-depth analysis of the air accident, implying a greater engagement with distant suffering. In contrast, the general absence of in-depth analysis in the Malaysian newspapers could be due to a lack of expertise among journalists (Pasquarè & Pozzetti, 2007; Priest et al., 2006; Horsley, 2016).

Naming and social actors (Praise vs. Blame)

Given that the categories of names and social actors are connected, these two categories are discussed together. As demonstrated in table 5.5, the Malaysian news media utilised more keywords to describe the names and titles of authority figures (Malaysia 14%, UK 2%), whilst the UK news media were more likely to describe social actors (Malaysia 10%, UK 18%). Based on the description given in figure 5.5, the topic of name/title refers to personal names and honorific titles, whereas the term social actors includes general terms concerning the occupations, positions and

relationships of individuals. In the category of name/title, the Malaysian journalists utilised a number of honorific titles such as '*Datuk*', '*Seri*', '*Tun*' and '*Prime*' to address ministers. According to Neuliep (2018: 253), honorifics are linguistic forms that communicate respect based on the rank of the speaker and addresser. In Malaysia, it is common and crucial to address important people who have been given honorary titles by government or royalty, because it describes their status and follows protocol (Prescott, 2009: 110). The name usually appears after the honorific title and position, indicating the hierarchical culture in Malaysia and also the importance of ranks and power in the country. These titles written in Malay are likely to be familiar to Malaysian residents reading English language newspapers (Prescott, *ibid*). The appearance of honorific titles as keywords in the news corpus indicates the domination of local officials in the news coverage of MH370. In fact, '*Hishammuddin*' (the Malaysian Acting Transport Minister at that time) and '*Najib Razak*' (the Malaysian Prime Minister) were regularly cited in the news articles for their speeches and announcements pertaining to the air accident. Additionally, the political implications were often amplified in the news articles, for example in the following:

Concordance 6 (Malaysia news corpus):

ceremony as **acting transport minister**, **Hishammuddin** said he was **prepared to shoulder the responsibility** using the same passports. March 13 - **Hishammuddin dismissed** claims that the missing aircraft system to technological capabilities. - **Hishammuddin advised** the media, especially international SEARCH Defence **Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin** Tun Hussein is **committed** to continue cooperating concentrates on both sides of Malaysia, **Hishammuddin promised** that the authorities will do whatever

March 10 - **Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib** Tun Razak **pledged** that the government will acknowledging his Malaysian counterpart, **Datuk Seri Najib** Tun Razak's **wisdom, strength and leadership** Twitter post by **Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib** Tun Razak **expressing sympathy** for the families released based on **Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib** Tun Razak's **guiding principle** - that as **remains committed** to the search effort," **Najib said** in his Twitter posting today.

Based on concordance 6, one can see that the two ministers were surrounded by positive comments such as '*prepared to shoulder*', '*committed*', '*wisdom*', '*strength*', '*leadership*' and '*guiding principle*'. Perhaps, the Malaysian news media were trying to promote a recovery from the disaster with a sense of community spirit and a collective experience of shared trauma and grief. According to Cox et al. (2008), a sequestering of suffering usually focused on efforts made to solve a crisis rather than damage and lost (see chapter 3).

According to Galtung & Ruge's (1965) concept of news values, journalists choose their sources with a heavy emphasis on elite people. Bell (1991: 194) also noted that political figures, government officials, celebrities and professionals are often cited in news reports. Roshco (1975: 74-75) believed that elite people are ideal sources for reporting because they often possess authoritative knowledge about news events in which the decisions that they make have a great impact on many others. Therefore, the category of social actors could suggest that the local elites are newsworthy to the Malaysian news media.

Surprisingly, in the UK news corpus, '*Najib Razak*' was absent from the keyword list and '*Hishammuddin*' was the only Malaysian minister appearing in the list. This can be explained if, instead of making direct reference by citing their names, the British press tended to make more general references using '*minister*', '*officials*' and '*authorities*' as is evident in the category of social actors. It is striking to note that the Malaysian ministers, officials and authorities were frequently surrounded by negative comments such as '*criticised*', '*anger*', '*refused*', '*accused*', '*baffled*', '*denied*', '*ambiguous*', '*inaccurate*', and '*contradictory*', indicating their lack of expertise and efficiency in managing the air disaster. Examples of this are revealed in concordance 7 below.

Concordance 7 (UK news corpus):

Hussein, Malaysia's defence and transport **minister** , was **criticised** yesterday for claiming Indian Ocean, Najib Razak, Malaysia's prime **minister** , may have directed part of that **anger** towards Hussein, the Malaysian transport and defence **minister** , **refused** to comment on the military radar the sea north of Brazil in 2009. Malaysian **officials** have also been **accused** of failing to share communication said on its website. One Malaysian **official** , **baffled** by the lack of clarity 48 hours news conference in Kuala Lumpur, airline **officials** **defended** that as a last resort to ensure climbing towards Beijing. However, Malaysian **officials** **denied** that the engines transmitted any was not made public until now. Malaysian **officials** have given **ambiguous, inaccurate** and at **cover-up**, and argues that the Malaysian **authorities** should **surrender** control of the investigate recovered." **Anger** in Beijing at the Malaysian **authorities** **boiled** over yesterday morning, 12 hours or **contradictory statements** by Malaysian **authorities** . Najib Razak, the Malaysian prime minister

According to An & Gower (2009: 111), 'the news media are more likely to focus on attribution of responsibility in crisis situation in which there is strong controllability and intentionality on the part of the actor.' The failure to immediately detect radar clues, delayed release of information as well as confused response have potentially made

Malaysia the target of blame. Another point worth noting is the use of anonymity in the blame discourse, where the identity of the authorities remains invisible to readers. The suggested that the authorities' role to the air crisis was more important to the UK audiences than their personal identity. In addition, the use of anonymity also revealed distance and unfamiliarity among the UK journalists concerning Malaysian authorities. According to Galtung & Ruge's (1965) news factors of Meaningfulness, culturally similar events are likely to be selected because they fit into the news selector's frame of reference. Thus, Herbert (2001:32) argued that the involvement of UK citizens will make an event in a remote country more meaningful to the UK media. Likewise, news from the US is seen as more relevant in the UK than news from countries which are less culturally familiar (ibid). This helps to explain the use of anonymity in the UK news articles, implying that the personal identity of individuals from the Malaysian authorities is less likely to be seen as relevant to the UK media. In this case, the authorities could be perceived as the 'other' whose personal identity was not important to UK audiences.

A similar result was obtained by Pope (2017) who claimed that no single named source was found in the UK news coverage of drone strikes in Pakistan. Crucially, the Pakistan authorities were merely referred to as '*local officials*' or '*security officials*' in UK newspapers. According to Chouliaraki (2006: 105), anonymity could prevent the encounter between the spectators and distant others and it is less conducive to the facilitation of sympathy towards distant others. Similarly, some studies have claimed that 'giving a voice' and 'giving a name' to sufferers could bridge the distance between sufferer and witness and essentially to increase the compassion of witnesses towards distant sufferers (Ong, J. C., 2015). In the light of these studies, the use of anonymity and negative criticisms of the Malaysian authorities may reflect a tendency of UK journalists to classify the UK as 'us' and Malaysians as the distant 'other' in their news reporting of the MH370 tragedy.

Nationality /country (Local vs. Global)

That MH370 was an international flight which carried 227 passengers from 15 nations helps to explain the use of keywords to depict the national identity of the passengers as well as the flight path. In this category, the analysis of both corpora revealed broadly similar sets of keywords (Malaysia 24%, UK 18%) such as, '*Malaysian*', '*Indian*', '*Chinese*' and '*Australian*'. These keywords were important to help provide fundamental information to readers concerning the identities of the victims and investigation team, MH370's flight path and the aircraft's ownership. More specifically,

'Chinese' was frequently used to refer to the national identity of passengers on board. The large number of Chinese passengers could be further explained by the flight schedule of the airplane which was supposed to fly from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. In the data, 'Australian' was mentioned frequently in conjunction with the 'Australian Transport Safety Bureau' in referring to the investigation of the missing flight. All these keywords suggest the importance of identity-related words in the news reporting of an international disaster which involved more than one nation.

A point worth noting is the different presentation of 'Australian' in the two news corpora. In the Malaysian news corpus, 'Australian' was presented with a focus on the local context. For instance, concordance 8 shows that information about 'Australian' was often quoted through speeches given by the local ministers such as 'Najib', 'Hishammuddin' and 'Ahmad Jauhari Yahya (Managing director of MAS)'. This finding could suggest the lack of accessibility among the Malaysian news media in experiencing the first-hand resources. In addition, the results also point to the possibility of information selection and filtering before announcements are made to the audience, indicating a strong likelihood of political control over the news reporting of MH370 in Malaysia. This proposition is further reinforced by the emphasis of the local political actions in conjunction with 'Australian' in the news articles, suggesting a great involvement of the two governments in handling the air crisis.

Concordance 8 (Malaysian news corpus):

| | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| evidence from Inmarsat and AAIB. - Najib said | Australian | Prime Minister Tony Abbott promised the |
| for the aircraft, with the Malaysian and | Australian | governments having signed a memorandum |
| On the search site, Hishammuddin said the | Australian | Transport Safety Bureau continued to work |
| executive officer Ahmad Jauhari Yahya said the | Australian | government had already offered an exemption |
| Government is still discussing with the | Australian | and Chinese authorities to identify a new |

Unlike the Malaysian news media, the UK news media often quoted the information directly from the Australian ministers such as 'Tony Abbott' and 'David Johnston' (see concordance 9). This indicates the greater access of journalists to information and essentially more independence and intensity of the news reporting about MH370 in the UK newspapers. Similar results were evident in Papacharissi & de Fatima's (2008) analysis which indicated that the British press made frequent mention to the work of other sources, using them to provide evidence or broaden the scope of the reporting. Hossain (2015) referred this type of framing as 'diagnostic frames', focusing on the identification of the nature and causes of the incidents.

Concordance 9 (UK news corpus):

millions of pounds. A report in June by the **Australian Transport Safety Bureau** said the most likely and would issue a response. Meanwhile, the **Australian** prime minister, **Tony Abbott**, said signals mystery in commercial aviation history. An **Australian** naval vessel ship will sweep the seabed everything is virtually speculation," the **Australian** defence minister, **David Johnston**, told pilot and co-pilot. **Angus Houston, a former Australian defence chief** who is coordinating the international

Thus far, the results are likely to suggest that ownership of media could affect the quality and independence of the news. As stated by Leong & Yap (2017: 164), the media in Malaysia are commonly dominated by the government and media ownership is a means of managing media content and coverage. Scholars further argue that there is an inequality between the access to media enjoyed by the ruling party in comparison to the opposition parties. Similarly, Netto (2002: 18) also claimed that draconian laws such as the Internal Security Act the Sedition Act, and the Official Secrets Act have had a chilling effect on media freedom in Malaysia, deterring journalists from carrying out independent and investigative journalism. In addition, some previous research has also indicated a tendency of the Malaysian newspapers to be more locally focused (e.g. Nelson 2002; Don & Lee, 2014). These factors were clearly seen in the news corpus in which the construction of MH370 was dominated by the local government's actions in managing the disaster and there was lack of plurality in terms of the causes offered for the air crisis. As stated by Horsley (2016), most disaster reporting pays more attention to the immediate events and actions for purposes of coping with a disaster, rather than broader issues of how and why disasters may strike. Conversely, the UK news media, which are privately owned, seemed to provide wider and more critical reporting of MH370. In this respect, Gabrielatos & Baker (2008: 8) claimed that most British newspapers reveal their stance on issues explicitly through language choice such as collocations or grammatical structure. This can be clearly seen in the content of the news articles which were more globally focused.

Actions (Planned vs. Unplanned)

The analysis demonstrated that a range of action words were used to portray the occurrence and investigation of the missing plane. According to Rispoli (1987:187), actions may be either planned or unplanned. The action verbs for a planned event usually denoting request, imperative, desire and prohibition, conversely, reportage of an unplanned event normally does not include these denotations (Rispoli, *ibid*).

Based on the keywords in this category, Malaysian news media seemed to focus more on planned actions as indicated by the keywords ‘*search*’, ‘*investigation*’ and ‘*operation*’ as opposed to unplanned actions (e.g. ‘*disappeared*’ and ‘*ended*’). The concordance analysis revealed that ‘*search*’ was highly associated with ‘*operation*’, forming the phrase ‘*search operation*’ to explain what had been planned to resolve the crisis as shown in concordance 10. In a similar vein, ‘*investigation*’ was found to be correlated with the work undertaken in the search operation as well as the outcome of the inspection.

Concordance 10 (Malaysian news corpus):

| | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| days since it went missing. A multinational | search | operation for the plane is ongoing in the |
| families. Malaysia remains committed to the | search | effort," Najib said in his Twitter posting |
| Prime Minister, who immediately ordered that | search | and rescue operations be initiated in the |
| MAS would continue to support the search | operations | and support the next-of-kin. He said it |
| Hishammuddin said the SAR multinational | operations | involving 26 countries have begun in Southern |
| remain committed to locate MH370 with search | operations | focused in the Southern Indian Ocean. Jan |
| MAS and the DCA were not part of it. The | investigation | team was set up after the Malaysian government |
| co-pilot. - The authorities handling the | investigation | and search for MH370 met more than 40 relatives |
| would be actively involved in the search and | investigation | , and work towards tracking down the whereabouts |

Concordance 10 shows that the ideas of accountability and proficiency (e.g. ‘*continue to support*’, ‘*remain committed*’, ‘*ongoing*’, ‘*have begun*’, ‘*immediately ordered*’, and ‘*actively involved*’) were strongly promoted in the news reports. In fact, the phrase ‘*immediately ordered*’ also implied the prompt action taken by the Prime Minister in handling the crisis, showing an attempt to gain public support after the air disaster. In addition, focusing on the planned action could shifts the audiences’ attention from the misfortune of the air accident to the efforts taken to solve the case, indicating that the crisis was under controlled.

The UK journalists paid greater attention to the unplanned events, as observed in the keywords list such as ‘*crashed*’, ‘*crash*’, ‘*disappeared*’ and ‘*vanished*’. Generally, ‘*crashed*’ and ‘*crash*’ can be defined as to move with force or to cause to move with force. The word can also refer to an instance of an aircraft falling from the sky to hit the land or sea, indicating an unplanned and unexpected accident. As stated by Galtung & Ruge (1965) and Bednarek & Caple (2017), the most unexpected, unusual, odd and rare events have the greatest chance

of being selected as news. Some examples of the keywords are revealed in concordance 11 below.

Concordance 11 (UK news corpus):

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| indications suggested that the plane had | crashed | off the east coast of Sumatra and was now |
| data recorders of the Air France jet that | crashed | into the sea north of Brazil in 2009 . Malaysian |
| recovered after Concorde flight AF4590 , which | crashed | outside Paris in July 2000 , satisfy a morbid |
| all systems were functioning normally. The | crash | has provoked anger among some Malaysians |
| Previous pilot suicide, as presumed in the 1999 | crash | of EgyptAir flight 1990 , has taken the |
| of a group set up by relatives after a US | crash | in 1994 , added: "We are completely dismayed |
| of MH370. The plane, carrying 239 people, disappeared | disappeared | during a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing |
| navigate their course. The flight reportedly disappeared | disappeared | off military radar as it flew north-west |
| Malaysian Airways flight MH370, which has disappeared | disappeared | , had no links to terror, Interpol has revealed |
| In March, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 | vanished | as it flew from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing |
| co-pilot's mobile phone was switched on as plane | vanished | from radar screens near Penang island The |
| compared it to an Air France flight that | vanished | in similar circumstances over the South |

Based on concordance 11 above, the notions of damage, lost and destruction were explicitly discussed. However, it was also noticed that the action words were associated with the explanations of the potential cause of the missing flight. Indeed, the UK journalists connected the unplanned event to some previous air accidents such as '*Air France jet*', '*flight AF4590*', '*EgyptAir flight*' and '*US crash*', allegedly to identify the reason for the disappearance of flight MH370 based on the past events. In this case, the UK news media seemingly go beyond simply informing UK audiences of the facts of the tragedy, but were fully involved in the investigation of the air accident.

Consequence (recovery vs. unsolved)

Since the airplane went missing without any clear evidence, it seems plausible that the keywords '*missing*' and '*disappearance*' would occur frequently in both of the corpora to depict the impact of the air crisis (Malaysia 6%, UK 6%). Nevertheless, the concordance analysis shows that the keywords were used to depict more than just the result of the air crisis. Indeed, '*missing*' and '*disappearance*' were used in relatively different ways in the two news corpora. In the Malaysian news, government action and responsiveness to the tragedy were again amplified in this category. Thus far, elite voices have been given greater prominence than the victims' families and

regular citizens in the news reporting of MH370 in Malaysia. A similar point was also made by van Dijk (1991: 40), who claimed that powerful elite groups, especially in the political domain, can partly control access to the media and thus control their portrayal in the news. In addition, their voices and opinions are often presented as credible and legitimate. As one can see from concordance 12, the voice of Najib and Hishammuddin as well as their contribution to the tragedy seemingly dominated the news.

Concordance 12 (Malaysian News Corpora):

| | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| he search for the MAS jetliner that went | missing | on March 8. "We have worked hard and |
| commitment to continue searching for the | missing | Malaysian jetliner MH370. "On this hundredth |
| chosen by Najib to describe the fate of the | missing | Flight MH370 was the most appropriate , |
| relatives of Chinese passengers on board the | missing | flight cause a commotion when they try |
| would continue search efforts to locate the | missing | MH370. - Hishammuddin said MH370 flight's |
| giving aid to families of passengers of | missing | MAS Flight MH370, said MAS chief executive |
| painful 100 days in MAS history since the | disappearance | of the aircraft. "We feel the families' |
| MH370 will be found . Admitting that the | disappearance | was unprecedented , Najib also noted that |
| crisis such as Flight MH370's astonishing | disappearance | is how charlatans, opportunists and narcissists |
| would pursue in solving the inexplicable | disappearance | of flight MH370, now in its fifth day of |
| irresponsible reporting in their coverage of MH370's | disappearance | . The minister also pointed out that speculation |

Even though the concept of recovery was frequently presented in the news articles such as in '*giving aid to families*' and '*feel for the families*', the media tended to neglect the voices of family members as if their opinions were not important. In fact, some relatives of Chinese passengers were accused of have caused disturbances (see concordance 12, line 4). Furthermore, rumours and conspiracy theories about MH370 which spread across social media, were depicted in terms of being '*irresponsible*' as well as '*charlatans*', '*opportunists*' and '*narcissists*' 'who weasel their way into public consciousness, either for shameless self-promotion or to stage-manage (Machiavellian style) the myopic and the gullible' (NST, March 21, 2014). In this respect, the finger of blame seemingly pointed towards the family members and those perceived to be responsible for starting rumours. According to Spitzberg & Cadiz (2002), the media can bring unfavourable aspects of a victim to light which, in turn, affects the attribution of responsibility for a crisis. Arguably, the transformation from victims to offenders may allow people to feel less empathetic towards the relatives of the passengers and implicitly increased the tolerance towards the government.

A different presentation was observed in the UK news corpus pertaining to the consequence of MH370. For instance, the keywords '*missing*' and '*disappearance*' were regularly associated with words that denote conflict and emotions. Some examples are revealed in concordance 13.

Concordance 13 (UK News Corpora):

| | | |
|--|----------------------|--|
| last hopes of finding survivors from the | missing | Malaysia Airlines plane ended last night |
| growing frustration among relatives of the | missing | , who feel let down by the authorities. |
| , grief and mystery as flight MH370 goes | missing | : Relatives endured hours in holding areas |
| Aviation, said the delay in querying the | missing | plane was extraordinary . He said: "If an |
| drew a mixed response from families of the | missing | passengers, who have endured a harrowing wait |
| recorder raises hopes that the mystery of | missing | Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 may be resolved |
| both the MH17 tragedy and the mysterious | disappearance | in March of flight MH370, which was bound |
| Australian beach. But until then, the shocking | disappearance | of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 a year |
| a definitive explanation for its sudden | disappearance | . Here, we round up the key theories - and |
| months after the aircraft's unexplained | disappearance | , suspicion over Capt Zaharie's involvement |
| sound unlikely - but so is the incontestable | disappearance | of a passenger plane with 239 people aboard |
| Airlines - that the possibility of a deliberate | disappearance | surfaced quickly. Some cited the possibility |
| fuelling concerns about the Boeing-777's abrupt | disappearance | in the early hours of Saturday - although |
| irregularly. A xenophobic response to the tragic | disappearance | of flight MH370 even before the facts are |

In the category of consequence, MH370 is understood as a conflict filled with mismanagement (e.g. '*delay*', '*xenophobic response*'), conspiracy (e.g. '*deliberate*'), sorrow ('*tragic*', '*grief*') and anger (e.g. '*frustration*'). The reporting of sustained conflict could indicate the challenges faced by journalists in the search for truth, accuracy and responsibility in relation to the MH370 crisis. In other words, the conflict frame could also serve as an evaluative function by searching the facts, identifying victims and attributing blame. Unlike the Malaysian news corpus, the concept of victim-blaming was not observed in the UK news articles. In fact, the relatives of the passengers were portrayed as '*frustrated*', '*let down*' and '*endured a harrowing wait*' (see concordance 13, line 2 & 3) rather than causing a commotion (as indicated in the Malaysian news article). Such contradictory statements could suggest differences between the agendas of the two news media in constructing good and evil. At the same time, these findings also suggest that the UK journalists were more likely to be sympathetic to the relatives for their loss, hardship and not knowing the truth. Instead of blaming the relatives for causing trouble, the UK news media allegedly blamed the '*delay in querying the missing plane*' and '*xenophobic response to the tragic disappearance*' for the suffering. The findings reveal a greater engagement of the UK

news media with the distant sufferers, as if they were part of the suffering. Contradictory, it also indicates that the media tended to portray Malaysia in a more negative and stereotypical ways as being irresponsible and incapable of handling the air crisis, which in turn caused great suffering among the relatives.

Nature (Expertise discourse)

Aspects of nature such as 'ocean', 'sea' and 'air' also appeared as keywords in both corpora. The analysis demonstrated that 'ocean' and 'sea' were mainly used to indicate the location of the aircraft (e.g. 'southern Indian Ocean', 'ocean bed area', 'sea west', 'South China Sea' and 'ocean experts'). In terms of 'air', the UK newspapers referred to a variety of things such as the people (e.g. 'air stewardess', 'air crash victims'), motion (e.g. 'air trapped', 'air escaping'), objects (e.g. 'air corridor'), measurement (e.g. 'air space', 'air pressure', 'air speed') and consequences (e.g. 'air disasters', 'air accident'). Furthermore, phrases such as 'air trapped', 'air escaping', 'air conditioning' and 'air pressure' (which were not found in the Malaysian news corpus), were used in UK newspapers to explain the possible causes of an air accident as follows:

Concordance 14 (UK news corpus):

from previous theories Crews involved in **air sweeps** for the plane, which went missing
 radar and then flown towards and through its **air space** has identified serious loopholes
 Data Recorder Records flight data including **air speed**, altitude and engines. It also monitors
 which flew for two hours on autopilot after **air pressure** dropped and its pilots lost consciousness
 contains memory boards is fired from an **air cannon** to create an impact of 3,400 Gs
 demonstrating to people how to tune their **air conditioning** to save electricity. Hishammuddin
 a wing or part of the fuselage, say, is **air trapped** inside it. Particularly in bad
 and sea conditions, the chances of that **air escaping** are really quite high." Undersea

The examples above show that 'air' was used to explain inappropriate air movement in the airplane which may have caused the plane to sink. The in-depth coverage of such possible causes reveals not only expertise among UK journalists but their intention to find out the root cause of the flight's disappearance and to prevent the same type of accident from happening again in the future. Conversely, the Malaysian journalists were more concerned about the 'Air investigation team'. For instance:

Concordance 15 (Malaysian news corpus):

to aid the search. - **The Royal Malaysian Air Force** (RMAF) radar recorded the plane, telecommunications company Inmarsat and the **UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB)** concluded investigation of the missing aircraft. **Australian Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston**, the chief flight MH370 complied with the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**'s regulations negotiate with Singapore from their **Silk Air experience**. "...and that is the sort of Air France Investigators who worked on the **Air France crash** five years ago arrived in enjoy cordial relations," said **Royal Thai Air Force spokesman** Air Vice-Marshal Montol approach used in the search operation for the **Air France flight 447** in 2009, whose wreckage

Based on the examples above, the keyword 'Air' was used to refer to a particular position (e.g. '*Australian Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston*', '*Royal Thai Air Force spokesman*'), aircraft (e.g. '*Air France 447 aircraft*'), accident (e.g. '*Air France crash*') and team (e.g. '*UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch*'). The value of experts and expertise was also evidenced in the news articles. For example, the investigators into the missing flight were constructed as 'experienced' experts who had handled similar cases before, such as the Air France crash in 2009. The promotion of experts could potentially create more persuasive and authoritative reporting and this may allow cushioning from the impact of the crisis, leading to recovery from disaster. A similar conclusion was drawn by Cox et al. (2008), who claimed that expert knowledge was privileged in the news reporting of the McLure Fire to maintain disaster recovery practices.

Time / location

In both of the corpora, the keyword 'Southern' was used in a rather similar way to describe the location of the missing plane as well as the location of the search operation. Some examples are revealed in concordance 16 and concordance 17 below:

Concordance 16 (Malaysia news corpus):

March 24 that Flight MH370 had "ended in the **southern** Indian Ocean". Hishammuddin, who is also satellite detected 300 floating objects in the **southern** Indian Ocean, around 2,700km (1,680 miles the search and recovery operation in the **southern** Indian Ocean, said Najib. Najib discussed The search focuses on 57,000 sq km of the **southern** Indian Ocean. April 14, 2014 Australia's

Concordance 17 (UK news corpus):

deliberate. The search for MH370 in the **southern** Indian Ocean continued yesterday but failed experts described the deep waters of the **southern** Indian Ocean that may contain debris belonging that it believed the flight ended in the **southern** Indian Ocean with the loss of all lives satellites to identify the search area in the **southern** Indian Ocean, 1,700km north-west of Perth

Given that the Malaysian government officially declared that Flight MH370 ended up in the southern Indian Ocean, it is perhaps not surprising to find that information surrounding the site was frequently reported in the news corpora. The news coverage of Southern Indian Ocean was mainly related to the search for debris and wreckage belonging to the aircraft. In the same category, '*March*' appeared as a keyword in the Malaysian newspapers to portray the month of occurrence of the air accident as well as the month of some important announcements made by the authorities pertaining to the missing plane (refer to concordance 18).

Concordance 18 (Malaysian news corpus):

despite the shock of the MH370 tragedy on **March** 8. The mystery of the missing Malaysia
KL International Airport at 12.41 am on **March** 8 and disappeared from radar screens about
in a playback at approximately 08:30 on 8 **March** . This information was sent to the Air Force
Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak last **March** 15 that Flight MH370 flew to the west direction
Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced on **March** 24 that Flight MH370 had "ended in the

This category was relatively small (Malaysia 4%, UK 2%) and included mainly details of times and locations related to the aircraft and the investigation process. Content generally focused on the suspected crash site and the investigation area. Notwithstanding, the small number of keywords in this grouping, it is nevertheless notable that '*March*' was repeated frequently in the Malaysian newspapers to indicate the date when the flight went missing (8 March); again, implying the importance of formality and the identity of MH370 in news reporting.

In this section, the construction of Malaysian Airlines tragedy MH370 in the Malaysian and the UK newspapers has been examined. The findings obtained in this section could serve as a reference point for the analysis of the second air crisis, the MH17 tragedy. As mentioned earlier, looking at two different tragedies could allow a more extensive analysis of how different examples of suffering are constructed in the news

media. Hence, in the following section, the construction of the MH17 air crisis is discussed.

5.5 A general description of the keyword list of MH17

As with the MH370 data, the first step was to examine the 50 most frequent keywords in the Malaysian and UK news corpus pertaining to the shooting down of flight MH17, as summarised in table 5.6.

Table 5.6. The most frequent keywords of ‘MH17’ in the Malaysian and UK news corpus (see Appendix 2 for a complete set of data)

| Malaysian News Corpus | | | | UK News Corpus | | |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| | Keywords | Frequency | keyness | Keywords | Frequency | keyness |
| 1 | MH17 | 1,191 | 150.8 | MH17 | 636 | 42.5 |
| 2 | Malaysia | 507 | 61.5 | Ukraine | 549 | 34.4 |
| 3 | Ukraine | 335 | 40.3 | Russia | 565 | 28.5 |
| 4 | victims | 372 | 38.6 | crash | 432 | 24.2 |
| 5 | MAS | 268 | 33.8 | Ukrainian | 345 | 22.5 |
| 6 | Malaysian | 257 | 32.6 | Putin | 296 | 20.3 |
| 7 | Flight | 243 | 30.1 | Russian | 419 | 19.2 |
| 8 | tragedy | 255 | 28.9 | missile | 292 | 18.7 |
| 9 | Airlines | 207 | 26.2 | Malaysia | 287 | 18.7 |
| 10 | passengers | 242 | 26.0 | sanctions | 299 | 18.4 |

Similar to the previous analysis, the term ‘MH17’ was the most frequent keywords used in the Malaysian and UK news corpus. Remarkably, the terms was also used more frequent in the Malaysian newspapers in contrast to the UK newspapers (Malaysia: 1,191, UK: 636). Subsequently, a collocation analysis was carried out. A span of five words to the left and right of ‘MH17’ was again chosen, to offer some consistency. Table 5.7 shows the 10 most frequent collocates of ‘MH17’.

Table 5.7 Most frequent collocates of ‘MH17’

| Malaysian News corpus | | | | UK News corpus | | |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| | Collocates | Frequency | logDice | Collocates | Frequency | logDice |
| 1 | of | 393 | 12.074 | flight | 109 | 12.013 |
| 2 | victims | 169 | 12.035 | down | 83 | 11.504 |
| 3 | tragedy | 153 | 12.026 | crash | 70 | 11.263 |
| 4 | the | 516 | 11.516 | downing | 42 | 11.219 |
| 5 | flight | 103 | 11.478 | Flight | 32 | 10.788 |
| 6 | crash | 96 | 11.406 | shot | 35 | 10.680 |
| 7 | Airlines | 90 | 11.319 | of | 215 | 10.657 |
| 8 | Mas | 86 | 11.179 | site | 41 | 10.524 |
| 9 | in | 143 | 11.115 | shooting | 25 | 10.478 |
| 10 | Flight | 79 | 11.087 | on | 81 | 10.478 |

As can be seen from the list, 'MH17' was strongly associated with the preposition 'of' (logDice: 12.074) in the Malaysian news corpus. The aforementioned analysis has given a view of the preposition, which often occurs with nouns to denote an attribute (Sinclair, 1991). In the Malaysian news corpus, 'of' was largely associated with victims of the air tragedy such as '*the passengers and crew of MH17*', '*families of those lost in MH17*', '*remains of the MH17 victims*', '*the next-of-kin of the MH17 victims*'. Interestingly, the subsequent appearance of collocate 'victims' in the Malaysian news corpus (12.035) confirmed that 'MH17' was used regularly with reference to them. This was even more evident in the case of 'tragedy' (12.026), which was almost exclusively used to describe the victims such as '*victims of MH17 tragedy*', indicating that the air accident was causing great suffering to the people. All of this evidence suggested that there was a tendency to position 'MH17' close to victimisation and suffering in the Malaysian newspapers.

In English, the article 'the' is most used before nouns to refer to particular things or people that have already been mentioned or are assumed to be common knowledge (Downing, 2015: 377). The examination of the fourth collocate 'the' in the Malaysian news corpus allowed us to identify important descriptors that accompany 'MH17'. Based on the concordance analysis, 'the' was associated with a variety of things and people such as '*the remains of the MH17 victims*', '*the case of MH17*', '*the downing of flight MH17*', '*the MH17 incident*', '*the MH17 crash*', '*the MH17 aircraft*' and '*the Malaysian MH17 investigation team*'. The result shows that 'MH17' was frequently used to refer to different events, objects, people and matters related to the air crisis, implying a higher level of formality in the Malaysian news reporting. The result help to explain the higher frequency of 'MH17' in the Malaysian news corpus compared to the UK news corpus.

In the UK news corpus, 'MH17' was strongly associated with a number of lexical words such as 'Flight' (12.013), 'down' (11.504) and 'crash' (11.263). The concordance analysis revealed that the collocates were used to refer mainly to the aircraft as '*Flight MH17*', the effect of the incident (e.g. '*shooting down of MH17*') as well as the location (e.g. '*MH17 crash site*'). Unlike grammatical words, lexical words carry meaning and they generally indicate a person, place or thing (van Gelderen, 2002: 11). Therefore, the list of collocates list could suggest a more specific use of 'MH17' in the UK newspapers referred mainly to the aircraft and the effect and location of the air disaster as indicated by the meanings of the lexical words. In contrast, the grammatical words in the Malaysian newspapers served as an important

element to connect ‘MH17’ to different meanings, resulting in a much higher frequency in the use of ‘MH17’.

In the next section, the 50 most frequent keywords were grouped into ten semantic categories to gain a thorough understanding of the topics pertaining to MH17.

Figure 5.7 Identified semantic categories/ topics for MH17 (BNC as reference corpus)

| Semantic Category//Topic | Malaysian News Corpus | UK news Corpus |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Aircraft-related terms | MAS, Flight, Airlines, flight, aircraft, Boeing, MH370, MH17, plane, board | MH17, flight, Airlines, plane, jet, Flight, aircraft, MH370 |
| Country/nationality | Malaysia, Ukraine, Kuala Lumpur, Netherlands, Australia, Amsterdam, Malaysian, Malaysians, Ukrainian, Dutch, international | Ukraine, Russia, Malaysia, Donetsk, Russia's, Moscow, Kiev, Ukraine's, Kuala, Lumpur Ukrainian, Russian, Dutch, Malaysian, Russians, EU, international |
| Names/ titles | Datuk, Seri, Najib, Mohd, Tun, Razak, , Liow | Putin, Cameron, Vladimir, Obama, Putin's |
| Social Actors | victims, families, crew, passengers, Minister | separatists, minister, investigators, victims, experts, prime |
| Actions | crash, crashed, flying, carrying, downing, investigation, shot | crash, shot, fired |
| Consequences | tragedy, incident, remains | tragedy, disaster |
| Time/location | today, July, eastern, site | site, eastern |
| Law | justice | sanctions |
| War related terms | Nil. | Missile, BUK, rebels, military, rebel. (death) bodies |
| Others | ceremony | Nil. |

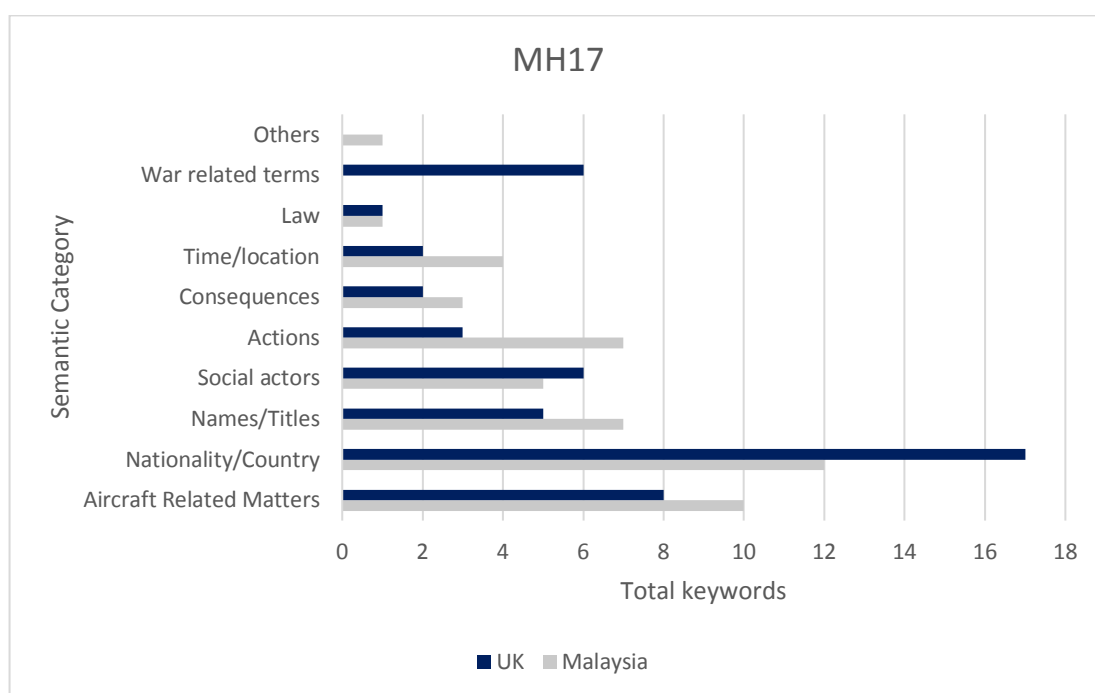
Following the description of semantic categories or topics for MH370 (see Figure 5.5), two new categories were formed based on the data obtained from the MH17 news corpora. The two new categories were ‘law’ and ‘war relater terms’. In the law category, all keywords were related to the system of rules and regulations, legal code

and actions as well as penalties. The category of war related terms comprised keywords relating to violent/armed conflict, military weapons and the related issues of damage and death. Consistent with the analysis of data for MH370, a statistical analysis was carried out based on the number of keywords appearing in each semantic category/topic, as summarised in Table 5.8 and Figure 5.8.

Table 5.8 (Numbers) and percentages of total keywords by Malaysian and UK newspapers in each semantic category/topic (percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole)

| Keywords of MH17 | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Malaysia | UK |
| Semantics category | Keywords: n=50 | Keywords: n=50 |
| Aircraft Related Matters | 10 (20%) | 8 (16%) |
| Nationality/Country | 12 (24%) | 17 (34%) |
| Names/Titles | 7 (14%) | 5 (10%) |
| Social actors | 5 (10%) | 6 (12%) |
| Actions | 7 (14%) | 3 (6%) |
| Consequences | 3 (6%) | 2 (4%) |
| Time/location | 4 (8%) | 2 (4%) |
| Law | 1 (2%) | 1 (2%) |
| War related terms | 0 (0%) | 6 (12%) |
| Others | 1 (2%) | 0 (0%) |

Figure 5.8 Percentage distribution of semantic categories/topics of MH17 from the Malaysian and UK newspapers



The bar chart above shows the percentage of keywords in each category. Given multiple countries such as the Netherlands, Ukraine, Malaysia, Australia, UK and Russia which were involved in this air disaster, it then became apparent that most of the keywords in the news corpora seem to be used to refer to the countries, the Government and the nationality of the victims (Malaysia 24%, UK 34%). Aircraft related matters became the second most salient category (Malaysia 20%, UK 16%). Topics related to names/titles (Malaysia 16%, UK 10%), social actors (Malaysia 8%, UK 12%), actions (Malaysia 15%, UK 6%), consequences (Malaysia 6%, UK 4%) and time/location (Malaysia 8%, UK 4%) were also salient in the news reporting of the tragedy of flight MH17. Interestingly, war related matters were salient in the UK newspapers but not in the Malaysian newspapers (Malaysia 0%, UK 12%). These results imply that the news media deliberately promoted or avoided reporting on this issue. Apparently, the UK journalists sought to address the issues of war pertaining to the shooting down of flight MH17, whereas, the Malaysian journalists seemingly avoided reporting on the conflict or political issues. As indicated by Woods (2006: 60), the vocabulary of politics 'is less about the deliberate use of emotionally charged lexical items, and more about the careful promotion of words and concepts designed to construct a network of presupposed political realities'. For further comparative analysis, the researcher then focused on the individual keywords within each semantic category. Based on the keyword analysis, different themes emerged from the categories.

5.5.1 A general discussion of the semantic categories/topics of MH17

Aircraft related matters: (Recovery vs. Blame)

As can be seen from the list, MH17 seems to be strongly associated with aircraft related matters in both of the corpora. The result is revealed through the use of keywords such as 'Airlines', 'flight', 'aircraft', 'plane', 'MH17' and 'MH370'. These keywords were found to depict matters, people and objects related to the airplane. In addition, this semantic category was the second largest category in the two corpora, suggesting that the topic was important to the news reporting of the air tragedy. Looking at the keywords in the news corpus, a point worth noting is the frequent use of 'MH370' (the previous tragedy) in the MH17 context. The revisiting of MH370 could point to a strong connection between these two incidents. In the Malaysian news corpus, 'MH370' appears to represent a great emotional and practical engagement of the government and the people in the two air crises. Some of the examples are shown in concordance 19:

Concordance 19 (Malaysian news corpus):

into consideration that both the MH17 and **MH370** are classified as **major aviation disasters**
for the victims of the **ill-fated** MH17 and **MH370** but **the government's good intention** to
our case the **twin tragedies** of MH17 and **MH370** . I sincerely hope that the government will
have to say **Malaysia has responded** to the **MH370** tragedy and the atrocity of MH17 with **strength**
the government **has done for families** of **MH370** and MH17 victims. "The government does
MH17, **it had not neglected efforts to find** **MH370** . At the same conference, Armed Forces Chief
by United Kingdom experts. The search for **MH370** is **ongoing** but no trace of the aircraft

Based on concordance 19 above, the two aircraft-related terms ('*MH370*' and '*MH17*') seem to demonstrate a great concern in the media for the loss and grief arising from the air accidents. For example, '*MH370*' and '*MH17*' were described as '*major aviation disaster*', '*ill-fated*' and '*twin tragedies*'. This is likely to construct a shared understanding of the two tragedies, inviting audiences to bear witness to the double suffering. Interestingly, despite the fact that these news articles express the notion of suffering, such ideas were immediately accompanied by political implications. The political focus is revealed in phrases such as '*government's good intentions*', '*Malaysia has responded [...] with strength*', '*the government has done for families*', '*It had not neglected efforts to find MH370*' and '*the search for MH370 is ongoing*'. Having acknowledged the suffering in the two tragedies, the news media show a shift of attention to focus on engagement and active efforts to solve the problem. The emphasis on continuing efforts to managing the crisis may enhance the sequestering of suffering, by promoting the appearance of recovery from the sad events (Cox et al., 2008). Therefore, it could be argued that the previous tragedy of MH370 was likely to be mentioned in the local newspapers to highlight the need for unity (Gortner & Pennebaker, 2003) in the circumstances of a double loss and to promote domestic political action for recovery purposes.

Similarly, in the UK newspapers, '*MH370*' was found to be associated with the victims' families, again framing ideas of grief and double suffering (see concordance 20). It is observed that the suffering discourse is implied in phrases such as '*lost my husband*', '*lost her stepdaughter*', '*lost relatives*' and '*feel grief*'. However, unlike in the Malaysian news corpus, the suffering discourse was merely acknowledged without further indication of recovery actions. In fact, the news media expressed their criticism of the management of the MH370 disaster as '*unexplained disappearance*', '*under heavy criticism*' and '*remains a mystery*', indicating the failure of officials in solving the crisis.

Concordance 20 (the UK news corpus):

travelling on MH17. "Lost my husband on **MH370** and now lost my friends," she wrote on
on the missing Malaysia Airlines flight **MH370** , lost her stepdaughter on MH17. Sanjid
downed MH17 lost relatives on missing flight **MH370** Family who suffered loss in March tragedy
made me reflect back on what happened [to **MH370**], I just feel grief." Sta Maria said she
the family and friends of those on board **MH370** , the crash of MH17 is a stark reminder
the unexplained disappearance of flight **MH370** with 239 people aboard in March. The airline's
under heavy criticism for its handling of **MH370's** disappearance - particularly in China,
the southern Indian Ocean. The cause of **MH370's** disappearance remains a mystery, with investigators

Hence these findings show that 'MH370' was used similarly in both corpora to indicate a discourse of suffering. However, the message following the suffering discourse was found to be slightly different. In the Malaysia news corpus, the idea of suffering was observed to be immediately followed by recovery discourse through the promotion of political action. Conversely, the distant suffering in the UK news corpus was found to be associated with negative criticism and the attribution of blame. Information pertaining to recovery was generally invisible to the readers. Indeed, the UK news media paid greater attention to the outcome of the crisis than the recovery process.

This semantic category also shows that the keyword 'MAS' (Malaysia Airlines Company), which was frequently mentioned in the Malaysian news corpus, was absent from the UK news corpus. The absence of the keyword could be linked to the different reporting styles in the two countries. Based on the concordance analysis, the Malaysian journalists exhibited a preference for a completely named source, for instance, 'Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flight MH17', whereas, in the UK newspapers, the phrase 'Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17' and 'Flight MH17' were favoured by journalists. To status-conscious Malaysians, formality and titles are generally important in represent different levels of status and identity, and this helps to explain the high occurrence of 'MAS' in Malaysian newspapers compared to in the UK.

Nationality / country (Us vs. Other)

In the next semantic category, there were also very frequent uses of words related to country and nationality in both of the corpora. These keywords reflected the importance of national identity in an international disaster that involved more than one nation. Additionally, the frequent use of country terms could also suggest a strong connection and relationship between the countries in handling the crisis or sharing the pain. Surprisingly, the keywords were found to be framed differently in the two

news corpora, suggesting a different emphasis of the news media in reporting country-related matters. Apart from 'Ukraine' and 'Malaysia', Malaysia news media made frequent reference to countries such as the 'Netherlands', 'Australia' and 'Amsterdam', while UK news media were more focused on 'Russia', 'Donetsk', 'Moscow' and 'Kiev'. In the Malaysian corpus, countries were often used to describe the point of departure ('Amsterdam'), nationality ('Australia', 'Netherlands') and the investigation team ('Netherlands'), for example:

Concordance 21 (Malaysian news corpus):

the MH17 Joint **Investigation Team**, joining **Netherlands** , Australia, Belgium and Ukraine. It was investigation as most of the **victims are from** the **Netherlands** . "We wish to stress here that Malaysia Ukraine on July 17 as it **was flying from Amsterdam** to Kuala Lumpur with 283 passengers and and 15 crew members, **was on its way from Amsterdam** to Kuala Lumpur when it crashed in Donetsk the MH17 search and **investigation efforts**. **Australia** will **join Malaysia to seek** justice and **the passengers were from** the Netherlands, **Australia** , Indonesia, United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium mourn. RIP MH17." It carried the caption: " **Australia stands united in grief** with Malaysia on

Concordance 21 above shows that countries were depicted in a rather descriptive way, indicating merely the nationality of the victims and the point of departure. Furthermore, it is observed that the news media also focused largely on the investigation team, which helped to create a sense of global unity after the disaster. For instance, 'Australia' was portrayed as '*stands united in grief with Malaysia*', pointing not only to a good political relationship between the two countries but also the support given by Australia to Malaysia in seeking justice for MH17 victims.

In the UK news corpus, the media paid a great deal of attention to 'Russia' which was completely absent from the Malaysian keywords list. Additionally, 'Russia' was ranked as the 3rd most frequent keyword in the UK news corpus, including 'Russian' (7th), 'Russia's' (26th) and 'Russians' (49th). Referring to concordance 22, 'Russia' was mainly described in the news articles with regards to its military force, owning the missile which was suspected to have shot down flight MH17. Indeed, major criticism was directed at *Russia* as indicated in the phrases: '*missile system supplied by Russia*', '*failed to stop*', '*consistently denied*', '*remained culpable*' and '*anger against Russia*'. These direct accusations from the news media provide an impression of certainty that Russia was responsible for the shooting down of flight MH17, even though Russia had yet to be proven guilty at that time.

Concordance 22 (the UK news corpus):

anti-aircraft **missile system** supplied by **Russia** . Russia and separatists from the Donetsk
Russia. The EU is stepping up sanctions after **Russia** **failed** to stop the "flow of **weapons**, equipment
territory 12 miles south-east of the crash site. **Russia** and the separatists have **consistently denied**
of **weapons** being moved into Ukraine from **Russia** since the downing of the passenger jet.
by Russia. However, the US insisted that **Russia** **remained culpable** for its role in creating
The price of Ukraine's fall: **Anger against Russia** is hardening after the MH17 tragedy. But

Another point worth mentioning is the occurrence of keywords that referred specifically to cities such as 'Donetsk', 'Moscow' and 'Kiev', and these keywords were again not listed in the Malaysian news corpus. Based on the concordance analysis, these keywords were mentioned in relation to political issues. Some of the examples are shown in the concordances below:

Concordance 23 (the UK news corpus):

Republicans called for further **sanctions against Moscow** and possibly a block on Aeroflot, Russia's
this catastrophe, under Putin's leadership **Moscow** **will do** whatever it takes to deny responsibility
nearby. Putin's call for a ceasefire comes as **Moscow** and **Kiev blamed each other**. An earlier

Concordance 24 (the UK news corpus):

Russia. Russia and **separatists** from the **Donetsk** People's Republic, who controlled the area
pro-Russian **rebels** around the cities of **Donetsk** and Luhansk has intensified in recent days
that the **Buk system** seized by the **rebels** in **Donetsk** was poorly maintained or incomplete, and

Concordance 25 (the UK news corpus):

responsibility for this terrible tragedy". **Kiev** **said** that armed separatists had prevented
The rebels, for their part, **have accused Kiev** of blocking access to the crash site by
have continued to down Ukrainian planes and **Kiev** **claims** Russia is still funnelling weapons
flight MH17: Russia: Muscovites **put blame on Kiev** and dismiss threat of further sanctions

Several observations can be drawn from the concordance lines above. Firstly, cities were mentioned largely in relation to political or military affairs in the countries, indicating strong political involvement in the MH17 crisis. Secondly, the UK journalists tended to pay more attention to detail and adopt a more analytical approach in investigating the shooting down of the aircraft, indicating accuracy in the news reporting. Thirdly, the names of cities were found to be largely used to represent

unnamed sources or governments, such as in '*Moscow will do*', '*Kiev said*' and '*Kiev claims*'. Sheehy (2008: 32-33) found that unnamed sources are widespread in the foreign news in comparison to domestic news. In other words, foreign stories are more likely to contain completely anonymous sources. Sheehy (ibid) explained the appearance of unnamed sources in foreign news as being linked to difficulties in communication between correspondents abroad and home news reporters. Additionally, criminal libel laws and indirect political economic pressure associated with a tragedy could also affect the use of anonymity. Sheehy's finding could be applied to the present study to explain the use of anonymous sourcing in UK newspapers to refer to officials as '*Moscow*' and '*Kiev*'. Arguably, the physical distance between the UK and these countries could potentially restrict access to information. Furthermore, by quoting cities as the sources, the news media could avoid making direct accusations against the officials who only appear to be guilty; simultaneously, this could also help to prevent political conflict between the UK and other countries.

For this semantic category there was a noticeable divergence between the Malaysian and UK news reporting of MH17. The contradictory use of places adverbial terms could point to the selection of information in the news reporting of MH17 in the news media. The keywords in each corpus could potentially reveal political stances and relationships between Malaysia and the UK and other countries. In the Malaysian news corpus, Russia, which was suspected of being involved in the shooting down of flight MH17, was not openly discussed in newspapers. The absence of '*Russia*' in the keyword list could be due to political concerns in the media about making accusations against a country with strong military power (Bender, 2015). Taking an example from Duffy & Freeman (2011: 298), the *New York Times* newspaper allegedly precipitated the Iraq war by detailing Saddam Hussein's increased hunt for atomic bomb parts. Therefore, Woods (2006: 50) claimed that linguistic devices employed in the media and politics could end up having devastating effects such as war. This helps to explain the lack of coverage of Russia in Malaysian newspapers in terms of avoiding political conflict and possibly war. In addition, the physical distance between Malaysia and Russia would have possibly affected the access to information about the country by the media. As stated by Joye (2010), Obijiofor & Hanusch (2011) and Hanusch (2008), proximity is one of the key factors in determining newsworthiness. The news media normally concentrate more on news from countries that are culturally, politically, economically and linguistically proximate to their own (Hanusch, 2008). This could help explain why the Malaysian news media referred more to the geographically closer Australia in contrast to the more distant Russia.

Unlike in the Malaysian news media, UK news journalists tended to reveal their stance explicitly by focusing the blame on Russia and its military. Keywords that indicate the investigation team such as *Australia* were not found in the list. The UK news media were likely to focus more on military matters in in-depth investigations of the MH17 crisis. According to Kim & Lee (2008: 87-88), the 'assignment of blame is a necessary ingredient in problem-solving; without identifying who is to blame, one cannot resolve the problem and avoid its recurrence'. Specifically, when there is a cause behind the disaster, it is usual that a moral judgment will be cast on the agents involved especially if they are foreign actors (Kim & Lee, *ibid*). This might be reflected in the UK news media seeming to lay the blame on Russia for shooting down the plane and for its illegitimate military control of the crash site in the Donetsk area of Ukraine – whereas there had not yet been any serious examination of the crash at that time. Using place adverbials, the UK news media showed more concern for political issues and the facts of MH17, whereas Malaysian news media were more focused on ideas of unity and support from other countries.

Names / titles (Us vs. Other)

The analysis of this semantic category in the two corpora yielded completely different results. The keywords analysis shows that the Malaysian news media referred mainly to local authorities such as: '*Datuk, Seri Najib Razak*' and '*Liow*'. As mentioned previously, '*Datuk*', '*Seri*' and '*Tun*' are Malay honorifics used to address Malaysian ministers. The use of these keywords could suggest that the news media made numerous references to local authorities in terms of their speeches and actions, as seen in concordance 26.

Concordance 26 (Malaysian news corpus):

passengers and 15 crew. Prime Minister Datuk Seri **Najib** Tun Razak had **said** that Ukrainian authorities aircraft was believed to have been shot down. **Najib** **stressed** that responsibility for the lives REGARDING MH17 TRAGEDY Prime Minister Datuk Seri **Najib** Tun Razak has taken a very **rational, strong** aircraft to justice. "Prime Minister Datuk Seri **Najib** Tun Razak had announced that he would **endeavour** much to bear. In his speech at the event, **Najib** also **assured** that Malaysia was committed through the **efforts** of our prime minister **Najib** ," he said while winding up debates at the

Based on concordance 26 above, the Malaysian prime minister '*Najib Tun Razak*' was surrounded by a range of communication verbs such as '*said*', '*stressed*', '*announced*' and '*assured*', indicating that the news media paid relatively more attention to him and his words and actions. Indeed, '*Najib*' appeared as the most cited politician in the keyword list, which could further confirm his prominent role in the

MH17 crisis. Crucially, he was also surrounded by words that denote positive behaviour, such as '*rational*', '*strong*', '*endeavour*' and '*efforts*'. Presumably, by quoting the minister's speeches and creating a positive presentation of him, the media generally provided an impression of expertise in managing the crisis. The promotion of the government may help to mitigate the negative effects of the air disaster such as fear and sorrow, shifting attention from suffering to hope.

Furthermore, the keywords analysis also suggests that there was a lack of news coverage with regards to foreign countries. In fact, the content of the news articles was dominated by topics covering the activities of local government, which seemed to prevent audiences from engaging with foreign news.. According to Galtung & Ruge (1965: 68), 'the more the event concerns elite nations, the more probable that it will become a news item'. In other words, the actions of elite nations usually carry more value than the actions of other nations. Galtung & Ruge further argued that definitions of 'elite nations' will be culturally, politically and economically determined and will vary from country to country. Galtung & Ruge's understanding of news values with reference to elite nations helps to explain why events related to the local elites carried more weight than other elites in the Malaysian newspapers.

Although Malaysian ministers were frequently cited in the Malaysian newspapers, they were found to be absent from the keyword list of the UK news corpus. The British newspapers were observed to refer predominantly to '*Putin*', '*Cameron*', '*Vladimir*' and '*Obama*'. The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, was ranked 6th (as '*Putin*'), 28th (as '*Vladimir*') and 36th (as '*Putin's*') in the list of most frequently occurring keywords in the UK news corpus. His name did not merely appear in three forms in the keyword list but he was also the most mentioned politician in the corpus, followed by '*Cameron*' in 22nd place. Through this repetition and reinforcement of the Russian politician's profile, the UK news media seem to have implied a clear interpretation about the involvement of Russia in the crisis. In the news articles, '*Putin*' was largely constructed as the criminal who was responsible for shooting down and killing all the passengers on board. Based on concordance 27, Putin was described as a '*bully-boy*', '*without human emotions*', '*directly responsible*' and '*thuggish pariah*'.

Concordance 27 (the UK news corpus):

sources have cited Russian reports that Mr **Putin** was now behaving "**erratically**" in meetings
states could be the next target of Vladimir **Putin's** **bully-boy** tactics, local politicians proved

| | | |
|--|----------------|---|
| CAMERON last night lost patience with Vladimir | Putin's | "bluster and obfuscation" and called on |
| relations with Russia. That is not to absolve Mr | Putin | and his terrorist friends , who deserve |
| Russia is run, said Shaltai, who described | Putin | as a man " without human emotions ", who |
| Financial markets were quick to react to | Putin's | tit-for-tat move . Moscow's main two share |
| Barack Obama issued a statement holding | Putin | " directly responsible " for the Ukrainian |
| Moscow bureau chief, John Kampfner, called | Putin | a " thuggish " pariah , who must now be treated |

In comparison to the Malaysian news media, the UK newspapers seemed to reveal their stance on the purported crime in a range of explicit and subtle ways through language choice, indicating a great involvement of the UK news media in identifying the criminal. This involvement can take many forms but Adam (1986), Kim & Lee (2008) and Joye (2010) claimed that the most prominent factors for an international disaster's newsworthiness in the Western press are the presence of Western victims and Western economic self-interests. In the present study, the UK news media showed great concern for topics related to the economics. Some examples are shown in concordance 28 below:

Concordance 28 (the UK news corpus):

| | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| faces a financial stranglehold and Vladimir | Putin's | inner circle of "cronies" will be hit with |
| severe financial difficulties . Nor does Mr | Putin's | threat to reduce Europe to darkness stand |
| policies. The economic controls can end once | Putin | stops sending arms to separatists in Ukraine |
| popularity, it's about economic damage because if | Putin | wants to have - as he does want to have |
| to economic sanctions has dropped since Mr | Putin's | decision to continue arming Russian |

Following a range of criticisms about Putin for allegedly shooting down the aircraft, the UK press also expressed their concern about the effects of imposing economic sanctions against Russia (as demonstrated in concordance 28). This finding was further indicated in the following news articles: 'Now the Chancellor is warning that Britain must be prepared to take an "economic hit" by imposing sanctions against Moscow' (*The Daily Telegraph*, July 22, 2014) and 'David Cameron concedes that sanctions on Russians after MH17 disaster could hurt our economy but it is 'the only language they understand'' (*The Daily Telegraph*, July 26, 2014). However, people were also convinced that the effect of sanctions on European countries will be minimal. For example, 'The most important thing for European ministers to remember during this crisis is how little they actually have to fear from Mr Putin - for Russia needs the West far more than the West needs Russia. Indeed, there is every possibility that denying Moscow access to the global capital markets, which is the

strategy at the heart of Washington's latest sanctions initiative, could ultimately result in Mr Putin's downfall' (*The Daily Telegraph*, July 26, 2014). Apparently, the use of economic sanctions was aimed to punish Putin and to bring him down economically. Thus far, the lexical items which surrounded 'Putin' were observed to be rather negative, indicating great damage and suffering caused by Russia to the countries and people involved in the MH17 crisis. In terms of 'Cameron' and 'Obama', the UK journalists highlighted these individuals' speeches and actions against Russia, pointing to a shared political value between the two countries to determine and prosecute the criminal of MH17 disaster. Some of the examples are shown in the concordances below:

Concordance 29 (the UK news corpus):

militias" and **"violating"** Ukraine, David **Cameron** has **said**. In an impassioned speech to the happening" in Ukraine. What happens next? Mr **Cameron** last night **warned** Mr Putin that Russia changed? Since the **"appalling tragedy"**, David **Cameron** has **pressed** European leaders to go further have stashed away in the West (something Mr **Cameron** has **explicitly threatened** Mr Putin's "cronies fulfil an order for Mistral warships. Mr **Cameron** **wants** an array of **tough sanctions**, including tougher EU sanctions for alleged role David **Cameron** **expressed anger** yesterday about the shooting

Concordance 30 (the UK news corpus):

says US president; Obama's demand Barack **Obama** yesterday **accused** Russian-backed separatists can do," he said at the White House. Mr **Obama** **warned** that if Moscow "continues to violate usual for Vladimir Putin in Russia Barack **Obama** **called** on Putin to rein in the separatists repatriate corpses. At the White House, Mr **Obama** **suggested** that the missile launcher used ho fired warning shots President Barack **Obama** **threatened** to "increase the costs" on Russia grows: With investigators denied access, **Obama** **tells Putin to stop** arming rebels - while

As one can see from concordances 29 and 30, Cameron and Obama were associated with words that denote warning, such as, '*warned*', '*threatened*', '*accused*', '*expressed anger*' and '*tells Putin to stop*'. However, these words potentially assigned an evil role to Putin and, in contrast, provide a positive impression of the UK and US in seeking justice. The imperative mood also reflected the superiority of the speakers as in the sense that Cameron and Obama possessed information and instruction which they expected the addressee (Putin) to follow. In other words, the collocates reveal a stronger political position taken by the US and UK over Russia. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, statements such as 'Russia needs the West far more than the West

needs Russia' (*The Daily Telegraph*, July 26, 2014) could further confirm the superior role of the West compared to Russia in the global economy.

In this semantic category, the keyword analysis could suggest that the UK news media constructed a contrast between 'us' (the UK and US) and 'others' (Malaysia). Firstly, the high frequency and reinforcement of 'Cameron' and 'Obama' in the news articles could enhance the UK audiences' engagement with these politicians. Secondly, the political actions in the UK and US against Russia were portrayed as comprehensible to UK audiences. Thirdly, Malaysia was in contrast described with a lack of detail or information, limiting the UK audiences from engaging with the country which was thereby potentially portrayed as 'other'. This seemingly supports Joye's (2010) finding that the Western news media are found to be discursively constructed in such a way as to reproduce the socio-cultural differences between 'us' and 'others', focusing mainly on stories related to Europe and America in comparison to developing countries. Additionally, the analysis also provides further insights into the previous study, showing that the Malaysian news media focused particularly on local authorities in their news reporting of MH17, which was an international disaster, thus separating itself from other countries. Overall, two of the 'cultural-bound' news factors that proposed by Galtung & Ruge (1965) were clearly seen in this category which are reference to elite nations and elite people.

Actions (General vs. Crime)

In the action verbs category, the Malaysian news media seemed to focus on a range of actions pertaining to the MH17 incident. There are words that generally denote transportation (e.g. *flying* and *carrying*), accidents (e.g. *crash* and *crashed*), crime (e.g. *shot* and *downing*) and operation (e.g. *investigation*). These keywords could suggest a wider coverage of action-related matters in Malaysian newspapers. Some examples are shown below indicating actions before, during and after the disaster. Concordance 31 (Malaysian news corpus):

(A) Before the disaster (Action verbs: '*carrying*' and '*flying*')

region, a day earlier. The aircraft was **carrying** 298 passengers, including 43 Malaysians
MH17 over eastern Ukraine. The aircraft, **carrying** 283 passengers and 15 crew members, crashed
in eastern Ukraine on July 17 as it was **flying** from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur with 283
time of the occurrence, Flight MH17 was **flying** at Flight Level (FL) 330 in unrestricted

Concordance 32 (Malaysian news corpus):

(B) During the disaster (Action verbs: '*crash*', '*shot*' and '*downing*')

flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. It **crashed** in Ukraine, close to the border with Russia
the Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flight MH17 **crash** . Amidon Midon Anan, a local forensic expert
777-200 aircraft is believed to have been **shot** down. Among the dead were 43 Malaysians
tragedy, said the statement. Flight MH17 was **shot** down over eastern Ukraine on July 17 as
responsible for crimes connected to the **downing** that occurred over Ukraine on 17 July 2014
of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 and the **downing** of MH17 are giving Malaysians a much needed

Concordance 33 (Malaysian news corpus):

(C) After disaster (Action verbs: '*investigation*')

international security team in conducting **investigations** on MH17 crash in Donetsk, Ukraine. "Currently
report contained initial information of the **investigation** into the crash involving the Malaysian

In the UK news corpus, only three keywords were observed and these keywords referred mainly to crime and destruction. The keywords were '*crash*', '*shot*' and '*fired*'. Based on concordance 34, '*shot*' was associated with the perpetrator in sentences such as '*pro-Russia separatists*', '*Ukrainians*' and '*Russia*' to indicate the potential criminals who were responsible for the air disaster. By connecting the action verb to the doer, the UK news media induced audiences to assign responsibility to parties indicated in the newspapers. The finding suggests that the UK audiences were more likely to receive more information about criminality in comparison to the Malaysian audiences.

Concordance 34 (the UK news corpus):

ruled out the claim that the aircraft was **shot** down **by a Ukrainian fighter jet** - a theory
in eastern Ukraine last week, allegedly **shot** down **by pro-Russian separatists** backed
overwhelmingly likely scenario is that the plane was **shot** down **by a missile, fired by pro-Russian**
possible to believe that the **Ukrainians** **shot** down MH17, that Barack Obama ordered the
strong reasons to suspect the plane was **shot** down accidentally **by pro-Putin separatists**

Concordance 35 (the Malaysian news corpus):

Ukraine authorities believe the plane was **shot** down **by rebels** in the war-torn zone. -
authorities believed the Boeing 777 was **shot** down. MH17 had left Amsterdam at 12.15pm
airliner, carrying 298 passengers and crew, was **shot** down by **unidentified groups** in eastern
us say we managed to catch **the person** who **shot** down the plane, we need to testify in court
members, when it was believed to have been **shot** down although **no one** had claimed responsibility

In the Malaysian news corpus (see concordance 35), action verbs were linked to unknown actors such as ‘*rebels*’, ‘*unidentified groups*’, ‘*no one*’ and ‘*the person*’. The choice of words can serve to blur the act of agency (that is, who actually performed the action). According to Woods (2006: 72), the writer or speaker can remove the agent or actor altogether using a passive voice. As can be seen from concordance 35, the shooting down of flight MH17 was mostly presented in the passive voice, where the agent involved was either relegated to a secondary position (e.g. ‘*was shot down by unidentified groups*’) or removed from the sentence (e.g. ‘*the Boeing 777 was shot down*’). Thus, no clear identification was given to audiences about the criminal, which seems to prevent them from identifying the perpetrator of the disaster. Despite the fact that Malaysian news media provided more coverage of actions pertaining to MH17 (as suggested by the number and type of keywords), the information given was observed to be rather general, with a lack of detail. The absence of ‘*Russia*’ in the keyword list could further confirm Malaysia’s concern and caution over political conflict. Additionally, it could suggest that the Malaysian news media made only limited reference to and provided narrow coverage of foreign issues in the MH17 disaster. Conversely, the UK news media tended to reveal their stance on the crime of MH17 in both an explicit and subtle way, providing a clear connection between the action and the suspected doer.

Social Actors (Local vs. Distant)

Regarding the semantic category of social actors, the Malaysian news media seemingly paid more attention to local sufferers such as ‘*victims*’, ‘*families*’, ‘*crew*’ and ‘*passengers*’. Generally, these social actors were the victims who were killed or affected by the air disaster. This coverage potentially enhanced the conception of MH17 victimhood in Malaysia. Based on the results of a detailed concordance analysis, the social actors were largely framed with regard to the support and assistance provided by the government. For instance:

Concordance 36 (the Malaysian news corpus):

| | | |
|---|-----------------|---|
| announced that immediate family members of | victims | will receive US\$50,000 compensation . |
| address the needs of the families of the | victims | of MH17, with the necessary services and |
| being offered was not conditional on the | families | waiving any right to claim further compensation |
| Airlines was ready to bear the expenses for the | families | of the tragedy’s victims wishing to attend |
| closed-door meeting with family members of 14 MH17 | crew | and the family of a passenger onboard MH370 |
| support for the families of the passengers and | crew | of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Flight MH17 |

Concordance 36 reveals a clear role of the government in helping the victims of the disaster. In fact, its contributions were detailed in the news corpus, such as *'US\$50,000 compensation', 'address the needs', 'bear the expenses', 'spent time to visit' and 'support'*. Arguably, victimhood was constructed through a promotion of domestic political engagement with local sufferers, suggesting that the government had done a deal to assist the victims. In a different vein, the UK news media seemed to focus on the different roles of social actors, as suggested by the keywords *'separatists', 'prime', 'minister', 'investigators', 'victims' and 'experts'*. Unlike the Malaysian news corpus, *'victims'* in the British press were constructed in a more general way, mainly related to the identification and repatriation processes. The results are shown in concordance 37 below.

Concordance 37 (the UK news corpus):

national morning. The **bodies** and **ashes** of 20 **victims** from the Malaysia Airlines plane were driven
Progress has been made to **repatriate** the **victims** and a train carrying the bodies is now
process for **identifying** and **repatriating** the **victims** continues and there are now 15 British
of the crash. More than half of the 298 **victims** were Dutch **citizens**. Two black boxes from
bodies, plus body parts from an additional 16 **victims** , had been **recovered**. Malaysia Airlines

It was also observed that there were minimal narrations of the victims' suffering in the UK news corpus. This implies an interruption of emotion and empathy for the distant sufferers. In terms of references to the *'prime minister'*, the UK news media made numerous references to leaders from different countries, such as the Netherlands, Australia, UK, Russia, Ukraine, and also Malaysia (see concordance 38). However, when it comes to the investigation of the crisis, the UK news media referred more to experts and investigators from Russia, the Netherlands, UK, US and Ukraine in terms of their expertise and investigation skills (see concordance 39). Malaysian officials, by contrast, were found absent from these news articles.

Concordance 38 (the UK news corpus):

report next year. Mark Rutte, the Dutch **prime minister** , called on Russia to cooperate fully. Dutch
armed groups". Tony Abbott, the Australian **prime minister** , earlier warned it would reflect "very
account", **David Cameron** said yesterday. The **Prime Minister** described the disaster as an "appalling
before take-off. Najib Razak, the Malaysian **prime minister** , captured his country's grief in a televised
over Russia's policies in Ukraine. **Russia's prime minister** , Dmitry Medvedev, said the ban was effective
the "satellite image" came as **Ukraine's prime minister** said that creating an army strong enough

Concordance 39 (the UK news corpus):

provided by Almaz Antey and other **Russian experts** . "There is an emphasis on not noticing Russia. Mr Antonov said **US intelligence experts** had claimed they could "prove the guilt from crash site arrive in Kharkiv: **British experts** to examine black boxes: Malaysian delegation recognisable international or even **Ukrainian experts** at the crash site, which was completely Monday night will be examined by **UK accident investigators** , it was announced yesterday. British experts access to the crash site for **international investigators** . However, Friday's stand-off with the OSCE

In sum, the Malaysian news media exhibited a greater practical and emotional engagement between the Malaysian government and local victims. In fact, the presentation of social actors was dominated by political actions and involvement to support the victims and their families. By contrast, the UK news media were found to make limited references to distant sufferers and officials in Malaysia. In addition, their news coverage tended to be more generalised and considerably more brief. Concerns or assistance related to the distant sufferers was shown to be rather weak in the news reports. The distant sufferers thereby received a lack of attention from the UK press. Moreover, the UK news media frequently made more references to the West and Russia in comparison to Malaysia, indicating the operation of information selection, and seemingly based upon the geographical distance between the UK and the country. This finding again suggests a division between 'us' (the West) and 'other' (Malaysians) in the presentation of social actors in the MH17 crisis.

Law (Justice vs. Sanctions)

It is interesting to observe that the concept of law was presented in both corpora, which helps to reinforce the idea that the MH17 air disaster was a criminal act. Keywords related to the law could suggest that both of the corpora laid a great deal of emphasis upon solving the crime and prevent it from recurring. Interestingly, the Malaysian news media preferred the word '*justice*', while the UK news media tended to favour the word '*sanctions*'. These keywords appear to carry different connotations, delivering different messages to audiences. Generally, justice refers to a theory and treatment of fairness, which is likely to focus on the needs of victims. In contrast, '*sanctions*' could be defined as penalties or enforcement actions for disobeying the law, and thus concerned more with the criminals themselves. The choices of words provided an insight into how local victims were given priority in Malaysia in contrast to criminals, and some of the examples are revealed in concordance 40 below:

Concordance 40 (the Malaysian news corpus):

standards, would be the best means of ensuring **justice** for the **victims** and their **loved ones**. *

can be caught and charged in order to get **justice** for the **families** of the **victims**," he said

grievances of the Malaysian public and to seek **justice** for the **death** of 298 passengers and crew

matter how hard or easy it is, we will bring **justice** to the **victims' families** and **friends**,"

tragedy, but also bring the **perpetrators** to **justice** . This is the hope of several family members

and "The **Terrorists** Must Be Brought to **Justice** ". MH17, carrying 283 passengers and 15

whatever it takes to bring **those responsible** to **justice** . At this point, we are not making accusations

As one can see, the keyword *justice* was frequently surrounded with '*victims*', '*the death*', '*their loved ones*', '*families and friends*'. The presentation above suggests that the disaster victims were innocent people who did not deserve this gruesome act. From such a perspective, the news media seemed to tell audiences that only through justice could the suffering of the people be eased. In terms of the criminal, they were regularly addressed as '*perpetrators*', '*terrorists*' and '*those responsible*' in the context of justice, seemingly functioning to obfuscate agency. The undefined identity of the criminal could possibly allow audiences to engage more with the victims in contrast to the criminal. Therefore, it could be argued that '*justice*' was more associated with the victims than the criminal, indicating the necessity of fair treatment of the victims of the disaster.

In a different vein, the keyword '*sanctions*' was frequently used in the British press to indicate legal action against a criminal. Some excellent examples are shown in concordance 41 as suggested by the phrase '*sanctions against Russia*'. It is observed that '*sanctions*' was assigned to Russia explicitly, giving a clear indication of the criminal's identity. In addition, the discussion also suggests that Russia should undergo economic sanctions for shooting down flight MH17. However, in this case, the UK news media seemed to exhibit concerns over a possible European financial crisis if economic sanctions were enforced against Russia. This was been revealed in news articles such as '*hurt British businesses*' and '*the UK needed to be ready to suffer financially*'. As mentioned above, western economic self-interest is one of the prominent factors in determining the newsworthiness of international disasters (Adam, 1986, Kim & Lee, 2008; Joye, 2010). This is clearly seen in the present study where '*sanctions*' were largely associated with the criminal and are also likely to affect European economic interests. This finding shows that British shares the same economy risk with other European countries as they are perceived to belong to the same community: 'us'.

Concordance 41 (the UK news corpus):

Putin is a sign of impotence, not strength; **Sanctions** will hurt British business - there is more of MH17 might amount to a war crime. The **sanctions** will target Russian financial institutions Resistance in many European capitals to economic **sanctions** has dropped since Mr Putin's decision to suffer financially if the EU agreed tougher **sanctions** against Russia. The world economy would consider imposing oil, gas, defence and banking **sanctions** against Russia over its role in the Malaysian Russian gas - are less willing to consider **sanctions** that could hit their own economies. However of European support for US-led economic **sanctions** against Russia, Obama said the loss of

War (Absence vs. Presence)

According to Richardson (2007: 93), it is crucial to recognise that 'textual meaning is communicated as much by absence as by presence; as much by what is missing or excluded as by what is remembered and present'. The lack of coverage on war-related issues in the Malaysian news corpus has an important ideological aspect, as the Malaysian media commonly neglect stories that may lead to political conflicts. As can be seen in the keyword list, no keyword appeared in the Malaysian news corpus to describe war in the MH17 context. As war-related issues were absent here, the Malaysian audiences logically did not receive the information. As stated by Berry et al. (2007), the news media have the power to sway public perceptions by choosing what to and what not to publish. The aforementioned observations strengthen the idea that there was lack of freedom of the news media to make an explicit claim. Indeed, Mohd Sani (2009) claimed that the Malaysian media's freedom is restricted through a number of acts of parliament. The media only publish political information after receiving approval from the government (Mohd Sani, *ibid*: 195). Hence, these results imply a clear political concern of the government in covering stories related to Russia and its military force.

In the UK news corpus, keywords such as '*Missile*', '*BUK*', '*rebel/s*' and '*military*' were found to describe the connection between war and the MH17 disaster. Based on concordance 42, war was again found to be linked directly to Russia. This finding is suggested by descriptions such as '*allegedly fired by Russian*', '*pro-Russian rebels shot it*' and '*Russia military who carried out this crime*'. Based on Galtung & Ruge's (1965) approach, events with negative characteristics such as crime and terrorism, injury and death, accidents and other examples of human suffering are more likely to become news. In fact, some studies have revealed selective coverage of environmental and technological hazards, in which negative aspects predominate. Additionally, the news media are claimed to highlight dramatic mistakes and are

biased towards distant others (e.g. Belle, 2000; Yan & Bissell, 2015; Joye; 2009, 2010; Thussu, 2004).

Concordance 42 (the UK news corpus):

Boeing 777 was destroyed by a surface-to-air **missile** **allegedly fired by Russian-backed separatists**
 forces have fired a "single surface-to-air **missile** ", **pro-Russian separatists have shot down**
 suggested **pro-Russian rebels shot it** with a **Buk** missile launcher. Ukraine's parliament
 shooting the plane with a surface-to-air **BUK** missile. **Moscow has denied** the charge,
Moscow has illicitly sent troops to support rebels in Ukraine who are accused of shooting
 Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, which **pro-Russia rebels are believed to have shot down** , a number
 crime. We will do everything for the **Russian military who carried out this crime** to be punished
 Ukraine will present the evidence of **Russian military involvement into the Boeing crash**. This

The coverage of war-related stories offered the impression of 'good' versus 'evil', where the UK was considered as 'good' in seeking justice for the victims, while Russia was the potential 'evil' who deliberately shot down the aircraft and killed all the people on board. The negative presentation of Russia could be a strategy of the British press to gain public support in assigning sanctions against Russia. Arguably, the absence or presence of war-related references reveals differences in political stances between Malaysia and the UK, each giving priority to their own self-interest.

Consequence (Incident vs. disaster)

In the semantic category of consequences, there were some similarities in and differences between the corpora in terms of these keywords and the news presentation. Firstly, the keyword '*tragedy*' was found in both of the corpora. Generally, tragedy refers to a sad event involving death and suffering. Presumably, both news media regarded the MH17 crisis as an unfortunate event causing great suffering. However, based on the concordance analysis, '*tragedy*' was observed to be presented differently in the corpora. In the Malaysian news corpus, '*tragedy*' was mainly associated with the victims, focusing on the great suffering caused by the air disaster to the people involved (refer to concordance 43). Arguably, the Malaysian news media tended to connect local victims and the bereaved in a negative way, producing a discourse of grief. By focusing on innocent victims of violence and indicating that the suffering person does not deserve the pain caused, Malaysia could potentially gain sympathy and support from the public with respect to the air crisis. Conversely, in the UK news corpus, '*tragedy*' was regularly presented as part of a problem-solving orientation to prevent the same event from recurring (see

concordance 44). Instead of focusing on the issue of human suffering itself, the UK news media seemed to provide a more complex analysis of the event and its implications for the future.

Concordance 43 (the Malaysian news corpus):

of the 43 Malaysian **victims** of the MH17 **tragedy** are scheduled to be flown to Malaysia tomorrow unexpectedly lost their **loved ones** in the MH17 **tragedy** . "Hence, surely they and myself want to for the **victims** and **families** of the MH17 **tragedy** . "Malaysia is consistent over the matter **families** and **friends** have been affected by this **tragedy** , though I hope they find some comfort in the rights of **Malaysians who died** in the **tragedy** , as well as their families, to ensure complete

Concordance 44 (the UK news corpus):

must take **responsibility** for the "terrible **tragedy** " of the downing of Flight MH17 after training **investigation** and how to **prevent** such a **tragedy** **from ever happening again**," a spokesman presented a variety of **explanations** for the **tragedy** , while broadcasting rebel leaders' denials short of directly **blaming** Moscow for the **tragedy** , but said it was down to Vladimir Putin allegations of Russian **involvement** in the **tragedy** were "stupidity". He said the Kremlin would

Secondly, apart from '*tragedy*', the Malaysian news media often described the consequence of MH17 in terms of it being an '*incident*', while the UK news media tended to utilise the word '*disaster*'. Logically, '*incident*' carries a more neutral connotation, meaning an event or occurrence, in comparison to '*disaster*' which is more likely to indicate damage and loss of life. According to Cochard (2013: 217) the word disaster represents 'an event (often impulsive and violent) which results in significant physical damages or destruction, loss of lives and property, disruption of the economic, social and cultural life of people and/or drastic changes in environment'. Although the Malaysian news media often presented a discourse of grief surrounding the MH17 crisis, mitigation could be necessary to ameliorate local suffering. In the news articles, '*incident*' was observed to describe local political actions and the investigation of the fate of MH17. Some of the examples are shown in concordance 45 below. As mentioned before, the discourse of suffering in the newspapers was frequently followed by a recovery discourse, emphasising government policies and recovery plans. The coverage of the political implications might diminish the impact of the MH17 disaster while also reproducing the power dynamics that favoured the local authorities. This analysis provides evidence in support of the findings of some previous studies (e.g. Priest et al., 2006; Pasquare &

Pozzetti, 2007; Horsley, 2016), showing that both political implications and recovery process are often amplified in news articles.

Concordance 45 (the Malaysian news corpus):

emergency session of Parliament on the MH17 **incident** scheduled for Wednesday. Last Friday, in **cooperation on the investigation** into the MH17 **incident** and defence exchanges between both countries that **Malaysia could investigate** the MH17 **incident** based on various provisions under Sosma **Malaysian officials involved** in the MH17 **incident** after their meeting. Najib will receive

In using the word '*disaster*', the UK news media seemed to recognise the painful experience of the victims and their grief. This finding is revealed in concordance 46 in which words that denote catastrophe such as '*horrifying*', '*tragic*', '*appalling*', '*shocking*' and '*outrage*' were used to portray the consequences of the air accident. In this case, the news media appeared to be more engaged with the sufferers. Possibly, the involvement of UK victims could be one of the key reasons for the UK news media's philanthropic urge. This finding could suggest that, in the MH17 air disaster, the UK saw itself as partly involved in the disaster, sharing the loss of life with Malaysians who were directly involved in the incident, rather than responding to the disaster in terms of empathy and solidarity with distant suffering as in the case of MH370.

Concordance 46 (the UK news media):

46-year-old taxi driver, described the MH17 **disaster** as "**horrifying and tragic**", but added: yesterday. The Prime Minister described the **disaster** as an "**appalling, shocking, horrific** incident Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, calling the **disaster** an "**outrage of unspeakable proportions**" investigation in the period ahead." The **disaster** **killed 298 people** on board, when the plane families of some of the **British victims** of the **disaster** to express his condolences at a time when

In sum, the analysis of semantic categories suggests that the UK news media generally referred to the MH17 consequences as '*tragedy*' and '*disaster*', indicating that MH17 was an event filled with suffering and loss. By focusing on the tragic loss of human life, this narrative could invite denunciations from the public and evoke a collective demand for sanctions as a necessary response to this distant suffering. Conversely, the Malaysian news media often portrayed MH17 both as a sad event causing great suffering to the people, as suggested by the keyword '*tragedy*', and as a neutral event ('*incident*') under investigation. Shifting focus away from the

humanitarian tragedy, the news media seem to have implied a need for local sufferers to return to normalcy. Cox et al. (2008: 476) termed the discourse of recovery as a 'return to normalcy', focusing on what has been preserved as opposed to what has been lost.

5.6 Conclusion

In this section, a summary of the findings is briefly discussed. A more detailed comparison and contrast between the news media based on each tragedy is presented in Chapter 7. Overall, the analysis of keywords revealed that there is noticeable divergence as well as convergence in the Malaysian and UK news in the reporting of the two Malaysian Airlines tragedies. In terms of similarity, both countries' news media offered a range of similar keywords, particularly in the topic of aircraft-related matters, nationality/country, nature and consequences. Arguably, the semantically similar word choice was not accidental. These keywords were important in giving explanations of the vehicles involved (e.g. *'flight'*, *'aircraft'*), the location of the events (e.g. *'Ukraine'*, *'China'*) and the outcomes (e.g. *'disappearance'*, *'shot down'*), telling the audiences what, where and how the crises happened. It should also be mentioned that Galtung & Ruge's (1965) list of news factors provided a useful guide in selecting news items for a specific audiences. Some news values that stand out in the reporting of the two tragedies are unexpectedness, negativity, meaningfulness, reference to elite nations and reference to elite people, where reference to elite nations give the highest chance of being included as news in Malaysia. A summary of the topics in relation to the airline tragedies is given in Figure 5.9.

In the analysis, an expertise discourse was evidenced in the Malaysian and UK news corpus to promote recovery and the need for the people to return to their normal routines. In the Malaysian news media, the journalists were found to be more concerned with immediate events and the actions taken by the local government to cope with the air disasters, emphasising compensations and the recovery process guided by the political elites. Additionally, the voices of minister were incorporated to represent the position of investigator. In the UK news corpus, the expertise discourse was promoted through a detailed coverage of potential causes and effects of the air tragedies, implying the need to prevent future threats which, in turn, suggested a process to recovery. Cox et al. (2008) argued that the framing of recovery can be

achieved through a reliance on experts and return to normalcy, characterised by a focus on rebuilding, repairing, restructuring and the allocation of material resources.

In addition, the results of the present study is in line with the findings of Leitch & Bohensky (2014) that ideas of community spirit, learning and coping are reiterated in media discourse to promote recovery after disasters. Therefore, it can be argued that the Malaysian and UK news media constructed recovery in the news through a focus on the concepts of expertise. In this respect, the UK news media tended to construct the expertise discourse by focusing on investigation, internalising lessons from past experience, putting such lessons into practice and preventing tragedy from happening again (Leitch & Bohensky, 2014). In contrast, the Malaysian news media were observed to promote recovery explicitly, with a sense of community spirit and a collective experience of shared trauma and grief (Gortner & Pennebaker, 2003). In both countries, suffering and loss were juxtaposed with positive coping in ways that focused attention on what had been preserved instead of what had been lost (Cox et al., 2008).

Notwithstanding the similarities, it was nevertheless notable that the foci of attention in the two national news media were rather different in terms of news presentation (see Figure 5.9). In particular, the findings from the analysis revealed that the linguistic construction of the Airlines tragedies in the Malaysian and UK newspapers were different. What is perhaps most remarkable is that topics related to war and terrorism were presented explicitly in the UK news corpus. Indeed, Putin and Russia were often presented negatively in conjunction with terrorism. Conversely, in the Malaysian news corpus, a detachment from war and conflict was often clearly demonstrated in the minimal and careful use of war-related keywords (e.g. *'justice'*). The Malaysian news reporting was generally factual, engaging in 'just-the-facts' reporting from a detached perspective, merely informing the readers about when (e.g. *'July'*, *'today'*), where (e.g. *'eastern'*) and how (e.g. *'crashed'*, *'downing'*, *'shot'*) the incident happened. Overall, issues related to suffering and recovery received more attention in the Malaysian newspapers. In contrast, the presentation of terrorism and 'good versus evil' themes were more prevalent in the UK news corpus.

It can be concluded that the different constructions of the air tragedies and human suffering in the two countries' news media were reinforced by lexical choices made by the journalists, thus allowing the two media certain themes to be consistently developed that constructed particular understandings of the events. As stated by

Fairclough (2003), specific linguistic choices made in news texts reflect the contemporary language and culture of a particular society in which texts from different media, countries and audiences are produced and interpreted with different purposes. The results of the present study confirmed that there were differences between the Malaysian and UK news media in the construction of the MH370 and MH17 Malaysian airline tragedies. Overall, the Malaysian journalists portrayed the tragedies in terms of factual reportage, recovery and incident, suggesting a more positive framing of the tragedies. In contrast, the tragedies were constructed in the UK newspapers in terms of war, investigation and disaster, indicating news reporting rather more oriented to conflict.

Figure 5.9 Most frequent representations in the tragedy of MH370 and MH17 between the Malaysian and UK newspapers.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Topic of aircraft-related matters | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General vs. thorough 2. Recovery vs. blame | <p>Malaysian Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background information of the aircrafts (e.g. flight schedule) is important to create awareness among the people about the tragedies. <p>UK Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation surrounding the aircrafts (including blame attribution) is important to solve the air tragedies. |
| Topic of name/ social actors | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Praise vs. blame 2. Local vs. distant 3. 'Us' vs. 'Other' | <p>Malaysian Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local political elites are important in managing the air tragedies. <p>UK Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Others' are not doing well in managing the air tragedies. |
| Topic of nationality/ country | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local vs. global 2. 'Us' vs. 'Other' | <p>Malaysian Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locals are more important than the distant 'others' <p>UK Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'West' is more important than the distant 'others'. |
| Topic of action | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planned vs. unplanned 2. General vs. crime | <p>Malaysian Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government actions to manage the air tragedies are important to the readers. <p>UK Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation and identifying the criminal are important to solve the air crises. |
| Topic of consequences | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recovery vs. unsolved 2. Incident vs. disaster | <p>Malaysian Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The air tragedies are seen as a collective experience in which people shared the grief of the bereaved. <p>UK Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The air tragedies are complicated and destructive. |
| Topic of war | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Absence vs. presence | <p>Malaysian Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flight MH17 was shot down. The perpetrator is unknown. <p>UK Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia shot down Flight MH17. The perpetrator is clear. |
| Topic of law | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Justice vs. sanctions | <p>Malaysian Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal system should put the victims first. <p>UK Version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punishments to the criminal should come first. |

Chapter 6: Results of the attitudes study

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the results of an analysis of the keywords occurring in Malaysian and UK newspapers pertaining to the MH370 and MH17 tragedies were presented. Using Garrett et al.'s (2006) keywords technique, this section presents attitudes of Malaysian and UK university students towards the air tragedies. The attitudes study was conducted to investigate the extent to which the media construction of MH370 and MH17 tragedies reflect public understanding. Specifically, this section seeks to answer the following research questions:

3. What are the a) Malaysian and b) UK university students' attitudes towards the Malaysian airline tragedies?

In the first section, a brief discussion regarding the background of the respondents and an overview of the data processing methods used is given. The discussion continues with preliminary analyses of the data collected from the respondents of the study. This includes the classification of the keywords into different semantic categories and the statistical analysis of keywords in each category. Subsequently, for each semantic category the data from Malaysian and UK respondents was compared and contrasted. In order to avoid confusion between the MH370 and MH17 tragedies, discussions of the result are presented separately. A summary of the overall results is also presented at the end of the chapter.

6.2 Overview of participants and data processing

As described previously (see section 4.4.2), data was collected from UK students from Northumbria University and Malaysian students from Tunku Abdul Rahman University (UTAR). At the time of the data collection, all respondents were studying at the respective universities in various different departments. A total of 100 students were included in the study, 50 students were from Malaysia and 50 from the UK. The Malaysian respondents consist of 28 female students and 22 male students. The age range of the sample was between 20 to 59 (Mean= 27.16, SD= 10.1) and there were 17 postgraduates and 43 undergraduates. In the UK sample, there were 31 female students and 19 male students aged between 20 to 69 (Mean= 28.14, SD = 9.57). 30 of the respondents were postgraduates whilst 20 were undergraduate students. A

summary of participants in Malaysia and the UK is provided in Table 6.1 (a) and (b) below:

Table 6.1 (a) A summary of the choice of participants in Malaysia and the UK (by gender).

| | Malaysia (N=50) | UK (N=50) |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Female | 28 | 31 |
| Male | 22 | 19 |

Table 6.2 (b) A summary of the choice of participants in Malaysia and the UK (by degree).

| | Malaysia (N=50) | UK (N=50) |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Undergraduate | 43 | 20 |
| Postgraduate | 17 | 30 |

In the analysis of the data, the researcher first identified the meaning expressed in each keyword. Given the short responses of 3 keywords provided by each respondent, rather than longer comments, the keywords that shared similar meanings were clustered into the same semantic category. Following Garrett et al. (2006), the number of words appearing in each of the categories was then worked out as a percentage of the total, in order to allow some broad descriptive quantitative comparisons across the data and the two groups of respondents. The analysis was conducted with the aim to establish a comparison of the patterns of keywords found in the previous analysis of newspapers and the keywords provided by the participants in the attitudes study. Overall, the keywords were grouped into eleven different semantic categories. The categories are shown in more detail in Figure 6.1.

It should be acknowledged that these categories are shaped in accordance with a subjective understanding of the keywords. However, due to the prominent role of subjective interpretation in thematic analysis, Guest et al. (2012: 92) recommended possible courses of actions to reduce subjectivity in the process of coding and grouping. Guest et al. argued that analysts can review the groupings multiple times and piece by piece, and they believed that taking some time to sit back and refresh one's perspective helps temper any temporary distortion effects immersion in the data can cause. Another strategy is to provide a colleague with a list of your categories and ask him/her to look over a random selection of them to see if the connections between text and themes are intuitively appropriate and make sense. Subsequently, feedback can be used to revise definitions and re-categorise if necessary.

Figure 6.1. Description of semantic categories for MH370 and MH17

| Semantic Category | Description |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 Conflicts | Terms related to conflict, problem-solving oriented discussions, verbal confrontation, violent/armed conflict, issues of damage and death. |
| 2 Emotion/experience | Keywords relating to emotion and feelings, such as corresponding to sadness, fear, anger and disgust. |
| 3 Aircraft-related terms | References to aircraft-related matters, including physical objects, equipment, operations and airlines. |
| 4 Moral/religion | Keywords related to general ideas of religious beliefs and practices as well as moral values such as support and consolation. |
| 5 Law/politics | Terms relating to political issues including the political system, social or party politics or politicians. Moreover, the practice of law in terms of regulations and enforcement is also included. |
| 6 Country/nationality | Keywords referring to countries or collective entities in terms of nationality and region. |
| 7 Time/ location | Keywords pertaining to the time, date and location of the two tragedies. |
| 8 Social actors | This category includes keywords with regards to individuals or collectives in terms of their social roles such as occupation, position, gender and relationships. |
| 9 Nature | Keywords relating to phenomena of the physical world, such as the air and ocean. This includes basic features of the incidents; for instance, circumstances. |
| 10 Communication | Responses concerning the exchange of information or communication through media and technology. |
| 11 Fate | Keywords related to the outcome of the air tragedies seen as outside human control. |

In order to minimise the researcher's subjective judgements of the meanings found in the students' comments, Guest et al.'s (2012) recommendations were adopted. Grouping of the keywords in the present study was carried out at three different times. The first grouping was performed after data collection but before the analysis. A

second review of the grouping was conducted at an early stage of the analysis. The researcher then reviewed (and re-grouped) the categories at the final stage of preparing the thesis. Additionally, the researcher also sought advice from other researchers and linguists in order to ensure that categorisation of the keywords seems intuitively sensible.

Even though considerable effort has been devoted to reducing bias and subjectivity in the analysis, such interpretations of the keywords are not natural, nor are they universal. As stated by Ballard (2005: 1) there is no definitive interpretation of any text. Therefore, there is no reason not to accept different interpretations as valid, provided they are informed and logically argued (Ballard, *ibid*). In addition, Guest et al. (2012: 11) claimed that, despite issues related to reliability, a thematic analysis is still useful in capturing the complexities of meaning within a textual data set. Essentially, it is also the most commonly used method of analysis in qualitative research.

6.3 Results and preliminary discussion

6.3.1 Positive and negative orientations

Table 6.2 (Numbers) and Percentages of total MH370 and MH17 comments made by the Malaysian (N=50) and UK respondents (N=50) that were positive or negative (percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole).

| | Malaysia | | UK | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | MH370 | MH17 | MH370 | MH17 |
| Total comments | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| Negative | (111) 74% | (113) 75% | (140) 93% | (137) 91% |
| Neutral | (39) 26% | (37) 25% | (10) 7% | (13) 9% |

Before considering the findings for the various categories, overall levels of positivity and negativity amongst the responses were calculated (see Table 6.2). As mentioned earlier in chapter 4, the respondents were asked to provide three keywords for each tragedy. A total of 150 keywords (50×3) were identified. The keywords were examined and grouped into semantic categories manually. It must be clarified that there are undoubtedly some attributions which contain ideas of both emotion and conflict, and whose meanings may vary according to points of view and context. For

instance, the word '*fishy*' could literally refer to the smell of fish, but in the present study, it more likely means feelings of doubt and suspicious arising from the disappearance of MH370. In other words, '*fishy*' here refers to feelings of doubt and suspicious about the cause of an event or another person who was suspected of being guilty of some type of wrongdoing or crime. Seemingly, the word carries meanings of both emotion and conflict. In this respect, it could be useful to focus on the primary meaning of the word. Since '*fishy*' generally refers to a feeling, it can be interpreted as closer to emotion rather than conflict.

Some keyword items such as '*Air force*', '*China*' and '*communication*' do not exhibit enough clues to allow much certainty as to whether they convey negativity or favourability. In this case, these words were categorised as neutral based on nature of the meanings associated with the words. Nevertheless, some keywords can be reasonably assumed to convey negative connotations (e.g. '*danger*', '*trauma*', '*failure*'). The percentages of such inferably negative or neutral comments made by the students were interpreted in terms of overall attitudes towards the tragedies of MH370 and MH17. Table 6.2 shows that both the Malaysian and UK respondents exhibited clear signs of negative attitudes toward the tragedies. Surprisingly, the UK respondents provided slightly more negative comments when compared to the Malaysian respondents. In order to explain these findings, a detailed analysis was carried out as reported in the following sections.

6.3.2 Attitudes towards the tragedy of MH370

This section of chapter 6 details the results of the MH370 tragedy based on the keywords offered by the Malaysian and UK respondents. Table 6.3 provides a descriptive quantitative comparison across the semantic categories and the two groups of respondents, where the numbers of keyword usages in each category are presented as percentages (see appendix 3 for the sample of keywords appearing in each semantic category for the MH370 tragedy).

Table 6.3 (Numbers) and percentages of total keywords by Malaysian and UK respondents in each semantic category (percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole) – MH370.

| Keywords of MH370 | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Malaysia | UK |
| Respondents (n=50) | Keywords: n=150 | Keywords: n=150 |
| Conflict | (70) 47% | (90) 60% |
| Emotion/Experience | (28) 19% | (28) 19% |
| Aircraft Related Matters | (14) 9% | (0) 0% |
| Moral/Religion | (10) 6% | (1) 1% |
| Law/Politics | (3) 2% | (1) 1% |
| Country/Nationality | (7) 5% | (3) 2% |
| Time/Location | (2) 1% | (0) 0% |
| Social Actors | (1) 1% | (0) 0% |
| Nature | (6) 4% | (5) 4% |
| Communication | (1) 1% | (2) 1% |
| Fate | (8) 5% | (20) 12% |

Table 6.3 sets out the distribution of comments in each of the eleven semantic categories summarised above. The percentages represent the number of keywords given by each group in each category. The researcher began by looking at the relative salience of categories for each of the groups. Subsequent sections consider more closely some of the groupings within the categories. Based on table 6.3, it is notable that the Malaysian and UK respondents attributed very similar degrees of salience to conflict and emotion/experience pertaining to the tragedy of MH370. There was no mention of aircraft-related matters, law/politics, time/location and social actors amongst the UK respondents, in contrast to the Malaysian respondents who gave some minor emphasis to these issues. Overall, across all respondents, the most salient associations with the tragedy of MH370 concerned conflict and emotion/experience. Issues related to nature and communication received comparatively little comment. Each category is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Conflict

As demonstrated in table 6.3, across the Malaysian and UK respondents, the most salient associations with MH370 related to conflict (Malaysia 47% and UK 60%), accounting approximately half of their total keywords. As mentioned in Section 1.5, 'salient' refers to the high frequency items or categories in the present study. The category of conflict was found to be particularly lexically rich, containing many word types. Therefore, the researcher considered more closely of the groupings within this category (refer to table 6.4). The keywords belonging to this category have predominantly negative meaning, indicating destruction (e.g. 'crash' and 'broken'), enigma (e.g. 'unknown' and 'unsolved'), violence (e.g. 'terrorist' and 'hijacked'), flaws (e.g. 'disconnection', 'failure') and condemnation (e.g. 'stupid' and 'useless'). Within the negative comments, both Malaysian and UK respondents provided a number of similar keywords such as 'conspiracy', 'mysterious', 'confusion', 'irresponsible' and 'crash', implying perceptions shared by the two groups of respondents and particularly of the idea of an enigma (Malaysia 66%, UK 80%) and flaws (Malaysia 7%, UK 6%).

However, the conflict category seemed to be a much stronger association for the UK students, and it was surprising to find that there was less diversity in their word choices when compared to the Malaysian students. In other words, the keywords provided by the UK students were largely similar. For instance, keywords relating to 'mystery' (including 'mysterious') were mentioned 22 times. This finding could suggest greater consistency in word choices and possibly similar attitudes among UK students in relation to the air accident. This result may also be due to a lack of exposure among UK students to the tragedy of MH370 which could possibly prevent them from giving more in-depth comments. As suggested by Villanueva & Revilla Castro (2016: 113), a lack of understanding of the situation or difficulty comprehending what is happening is likely to distance audiences from distant suffering.

Table 6.4 (Numbers) and percentages of total keywords by Malaysian and UK respondents in the conflict subcategories (percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole) – MH370.

| | MALAYSIA | UK |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Keywords: n=70 | Keywords: n=90 |
| Enigma | (46) 66% | (72) 80% |
| Flaws | (5) 7% | (5) 6% |
| Destruction | (4) 6% | (13) 14% |
| Condemnation | (7) 10% | (0) 0% |
| Violence | (8) 11% | (0) 0% |

Despite the smaller word count, the Malaysian students seemed to provide a wider range of lexical items. For instance, the students were found to express stronger condemnation (Malaysia 10%, UK 0%) against human errors for the air tragedy, as indicated by '*stupid*', '*ridiculous*', '*inefficient*' and '*useless*'. After a series of confusing and contradictory statements from the Malaysian government and Malaysian Airlines (MAS) (Henderson, 2015), it is perhaps not surprising to find that negative criticism carried more salience for Malaysian respondents in comparison with UK respondents. It is also interesting to discover that a Malaysian student connected the MH370 incident to a '*stupid bomoh*'. '*Bomoh*' is a Malay word referring to a shaman. Indeed, there were news reports stating that the Malaysian shaman who wielded coconuts, walking stick and a carpet to locate the missing flight, triggered a mixture of outrage and embarrassment from social media users. Possibly, the student was not impressed with the actions of the shaman and considered them unnecessary. In addition, the issue of '*mangosteen*' was also observed in the comments. It is pertinent to clarify that, when Malaysia Airlines was asked to reveal what kind of cargo was on flight MH370, they revealed that a bunch of mangosteen fruit were in the plane's cargo. As mangosteens were not in season during the incident (in March), the statement gave rise to a range of questions as to why were there so much off-season mangosteens on board MH370. Subsequently, the idea of a mangosteens conspiracy as a cover-up of the truth of MH370 was widely circulated.

In addition, the subcategory of violence also carried more salience for the Malaysian students (Malaysia 11%, UK 0%) as indicated by the keywords '*danger*', '*terrorist*' and '*hijacked*'. Conversely, this category was barely mentioned by the UK students who tended to make more general comments about the MH370 tragedy. The UK

comments were largely oriented to problem-solving, such as *'unsolved'*, *'mysterious'*, *'unknown'*, *'inexplicable'*, *'perplexing'*, *'missing'*, *'loss'* and *'disappearance'*. As can be seen from table 6.4, the subcategory of enigma was prominent for the UK students. It nevertheless constituted one of the largest groupings in the conflict category (66%), showing high salience among the conflict issues. Matters related to destruction (e.g. *'crash'* and *'broke'*) and flaws (e.g. *'failure'*) appeared to be relatively less salient to the UK respondents. In sum, most of the keywords offered by UK students were rather reflective, conveying ideas of solving problems surrounding the conflict. In other words, the UK comments are more general (or less clearly negative) while the Malaysian students seemed to hold more negative attitudes toward the incident and, in turn, expressed stronger criticisms.

Emotion / experience

Given the high salience of issues of conflict among the Malaysian and UK students, it is perhaps not surprising that the category of emotion/experience stands out as the second most common group of comments made by the respondents (Malaysia 19%, UK 19%). Indeed, this category consists of a mixture of feelings associated with the tragedy, including sadness (e.g. *'sorrowful'*, *'devastating'*), anger (e.g. *'upset'*, *'embarrassing'*), fear (e.g. *'frightening'*, *'scared'*) and curiosity (e.g. *'fishy'*, *'interesting'*). Given that this category comprised several different emotions, it is further divided into several subcategories to give a deeper understanding of the students' attitudes toward the suffering.

Table 6.5 (Numbers) and percentages of total keywords by Malaysian and UK respondents in each of the emotion/experience subcategories (percentage are rounded up or down to the nearest whole) – MH370.

| | MALAYSIA | UK |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| | N= 28 | N= 28 |
| Sadness | (12) 44% | (9) 32% |
| Fear | (6) 21% | (9) 32% |
| Anger | (6) 21% | (5) 18% |
| Curiosity | (4) 14% | (3) 11% |
| Hope | (0) 0% | (2) 7% |

Looking more closely at the keywords within this category, the Malaysian students expressed more sadness (44%) when compared to other emotions. Acknowledging

that MH370 was an air accident, which killed all the people on board, it seems reasonable that 'sadness' carried more salience than other emotions. With somewhat lower frequencies, the Malaysian students expressed similar degrees of salience for fear (21%) and anger (21%). It is striking that the word '*embarrassing*', which generally accompanies guilt, shame or pride was observed in the subcategory of anger. One possibility which may explain these findings is related to the Malaysian 'bomoh' and the superstition surrounding the search for MH370, which may have triggered embarrassment among the students. Based on a blog published on BBC Trending (2014), it was claimed that the word 'bomoh' was tweeted more than 200,000 times and the overwhelming sentiment appeared to be shame. In fact, one tweet said that 'it's so embarrassing to have Malaysia and Bomoh in the same sentence' and others tweeted 'stupid, shameful' and 'ignorant'. Furthermore, the presence of the keywords '*anger*' and '*upset*' also reveals another interesting point. In the light of the newspapers analysis of the MH370 story, anger among the relatives was highlighted in the UK newspapers with journalists claiming that the anger was provoked by mismanagement by the Malaysian authorities. In contrast, the Malaysian journalists portrayed local authorities as capable and responsible, with no mention of anger among the relatives. Therefore, the anger expressed by the Malaysian students could reflect the stories reported in the UK newspapers, indicating the presence of anger among people towards the perceived unprofessional behaviour of the Malaysian authorities.

In the UK comments, the students paid more attention to sadness (32%) as well as fear (32%). In terms of fear, the students described the incident as '*frightening*', '*shocking*', '*anxiety*', '*worrying*', '*scared*', '*ominous*' and '*chilling*', suggesting threat in the MH370 air disaster. In consideration of the above discussion, these keywords possibly connect to the MH370 conflict with regards to its unknown cause and unresolved effect. In other words, the mystery of missing flight MH370 is potentially frightening to the UK students. Furthermore, anger (18%) and fear (11%) were mentioned comparatively less frequently by the UK students. Thus, these findings suggest that the UK students were more concerned with the implications of the missing flight as opposed to the negligence of Malaysian authorities. Given that the UK students largely experienced the suffering from a distance, matters related to distant authorities may not carry such high relevance to the students. This is perhaps the reason why the students showed less emotion with respect to the management team but more to the incident itself.

Another point worth noting in the UK comments is the use of the positive word '*alive*' to describe MH370 (see also the subcategory of hope: Malaysia 0%, UK 7%). In this respect, '*alive*' could refer to hope, indicating that the people on board could potentially have survived. Therefore, this word could suggest a more positive attitude of the UK students to the tragedy of MH370. However, this positive attitude among the UK respondents was relatively muted in comparison to the overall comments of emotion/experience which were rather negative, focusing prominently on sadness and fear. In a similar way, the Malaysian students' emotion keywords were generally dominated by sadness and anger. Thus, the results for this category could confirm a combination of negative emotions in the two national groups in response to the MH370 air crisis; more specifically, focusing on sadness and horror on the one hand, and misery and resentment on the other.

Aircraft related matters

The Malaysian students provided a number of references to aircraft-related matters (9%), such as '*MAS*' (Malaysian Airlines), '*French airline*', '*air force*', '*control system*' and '*black box*'. Conversely, aircraft-related matters carried no salience for the UK respondents (0%). The comments provided by the Malaysian respondents in this category were relatively neutral or positive, referring mainly to the Airline Company, equipment and operations in relation to flight MH370. Presumably, '*Air France*' was mentioned with regards to the investigation of MH370. Generally, French experts who led the French hunt for the Air France 447 were involved in the search operation for flight MH370. Hence, '*Air France*' could be used to denote the idea of expertise in the investigation of MH370. In addition, '*air force*' was another term found in the keyword list pertaining to the search for flight MH370. In this case, '*air force*' potentially refers to the military airforces from the US, Australia and Thailand which participated in the search operation for the missing flight. This finding reveals the notion of power, expertise and co-operation in aircraft-related matters, suggesting a rather neutral or positive attitude towards outside help. In comparison to the negative emotion reported above towards the Malaysian authorities, these positive attitudes give rise to the idea that the Malaysian students were more likely to respond positively to international airforces and to perceive foreign experts more favourably.

Moral / religion

In table 6.3, we can see that the category of morality/religion did not carry high levels of salience, especially to the UK students (Malaysia 6%, UK 1%). Across the Malaysian respondents, the evaluative tone in this category was rather neutral (e.g.

'humanity', *'respect'*, *'pray'* and *'Raja bomoh'*- shaman). The term *'humanity'* can be ambiguous, carrying either negative or positive connotations, possibly referring to crimes against the human race or kindness towards other people and compassion and sympathy. As stated by Garrett et al. (2005: 47), some attributions may blend positive and negative values. In this case, Garrett et al. suggested that a process of the restoration of context can aid in the interpretation of such keywords. One method of doing this is to go back to the original questionnaire to check the rest of the keywords, to determine if there is a clear sense of negativity or positivity that pervades the accompanying values (Garrett et al., *ibid*). In the questionnaire, *'humanity'* was accompanied by *'shock'* and *'danger'* which can arguably be interpreted as having a negative value. Similarly, in general, the keyword *'Rajah Bomoh'* (shaman) could be taken to express a broadly positive value pertaining to healing. However, in the data, the keyword was accompanied by *'mangosteen'* and *'hijacked'*, and hence a rather negative judgement was ascribed. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the shaman was described as *'stupid'* by another Malaysian student, indicating a strongly negative attitude towards the matter in relation to the shaman.

In a different vein, some Malaysian students expressed a more positive attitude using the keywords *'pray'* and *'respect'*. Seemingly, these keywords were used in relation to the victims and their family members. These comments appeared in positive contexts, showing a greater emotional engagement such as compassion and kindness toward the sufferers. It must be made clear that, despite the negative comments associated with *'humanity'* and *'Rajah bomoh'* (shaman), some respondents expressed slightly more positive perceptions than negative in terms of the morality/religion category. Thus, it could be argued that the Malaysian students were likely to express more neutral attitudes in terms of morality/religion towards the victims of the air disaster.

Even though the UK students showed greater emotional engagement (as shown in table 6.3) with the air tragedy, it is interesting to find that the morality/religion category carried less salience for the students. In fact, *'sympathy'* was their only keyword appearing in this category. This could be due to the different forms of compassion. According to Höijer (2004), there are several forms of compassion in relation to distant suffering, such as tender-hearted compassion, blame-filled compassion, shame-filled compassion and powerlessness-filled compassion. The first form refers to a perspective in which the audience focuses on the suffering of victims and responses of pity and empathy. Blame-filled compassion combines compassion with indignation

and anger. The indignation may be directed towards someone seen as responsible for the suffering. Shame-filled compassion brings in ambivalence connected with witnessing the suffering of others in one's own comfortable life, and powerlessness-filled compassion combines sentiments of impotence and powerlessness to alleviate the suffering of distant victims (Höijer, *ibid*). Looking at the UK students' responses to MH370 tragedy, we may recognise the modes of shame-filled and powerlessness-filled compassion. The geographical distance between UK students and the sufferers may have led to an awareness of the limits of the formers' ability to engage in and alleviate the suffering of the victims. Presumably, being powerless and living in comfort could create a distance hindering fully engagement with the victims both emotionally and practically, thus allowing the students to only express compassion without truly feeling the suffering.

Law / politics

In this category, some of the Malaysian students made reference to '*Najib*' (the Malaysian Prime Minister) and '*politics*' (2%), highlighting the involvement of politics in the tragedy. In general, '*Najib*' and '*politics*' carry no overt positive or negative value. Hence, for a more in-depth understanding, other keywords occurring alongside these items were analysed. Based on the keywords given in the questionnaire, '*Najib*' was accompanied by words pertaining to country, such as '*Australia*' and '*China*', suggesting purely political notions. These keywords potentially refer to the fundamental involvement of political figures and countries in relation to the MH370 air accident. In another questionnaire response, '*Najib*' was listed together with '*airforce*' and '*hijack*'. Since '*hijack*' generally carries a negative value whilst, '*airforce*' is considered to be neutral or positive, it may be difficult to determine if '*Najib*' has positive or negative value in this data. However, given the role of Najib as the prime minister of Malaysia, who was actively involved in the aftermath of the disaster, it seems reasonable that this reference was connected to his political role in managing and solving the mystery of MH370. Another possibility could be the declining standards of freedom of expression in Malaysia, in which criticism of the authorities is not allowed (see Kenyon et al., 2013: 9-10). It is pertinent to mention that, during the data collection, a number of Malaysian students expressed their concern and worry about freedom of expression before they provided their responses. According to Griffiths & Jozuka (2016), the Malaysian government has increasingly criminalised those who criticise Najib's administration, creating a 'culture of fear'. This finding would nevertheless further confirm the tendency of Malaysian students to take great care in selecting comments in relation to political issues.

In the comments, the keyword '*politics*' was likely to refer to exercising power and organising control over the air crisis, thus suggesting a rather neutral value. However, based on one questionnaire response, '*politics*' was found together with words that denote negative judgement such as '*tragedy*' and '*mismanagement*'. Seemingly, the Malaysian respondent was expressing a negative evaluation concerning political incapability in handling the crisis. Overall, there were very few comments in this category (2%). Content generally focused on the fundamental involvement of political power in managing the air accident, with some connections to other concerns such as countries, airforce, hijack and mismanagement. Notwithstanding the small number of keywords in this grouping, it is nevertheless notable that there were potential political impacts on the Malaysian students, also implying their caution with regards to making negative comments about political issues.

In this category, the UK respondents made very few mentions of law/politics (1%). One explanation may be simply that the students were unaware of any political issues with regards to the air tragedy. It should be mentioned that, during the data collection, the majority of UK students revealed that they were not familiar with the MH370 incident. However, after a short briefing from the researcher, they were able to recall some of the details. In this situation, the keywords provided by the students can be assumed to relate to the most memorable issues they remember about the air accident. Therefore, the absence of politics/law-related matters in the UK comments could suggest a lack of exposure among these students with regards to issues related to politics, indicating that these matters were not important to them. From another perspective, the students may have been reluctant to make negative comments about the Malaysian authorities. It is likely that social desirability would have affected responses to political issues. Even though efforts have been taken to reduce bias, it may not have been avoided completely.

Country / nationality

In table 6.3, we can see that the category of country/nationality was slightly more prominent for the Malaysian than the UK respondents (Malaysia 5%, UK 2%). Across the respondents, the evaluation tone in this category was rather neutral (e.g. '*Australia*', '*China*', '*Malaysia*' and '*United States*'), comprising largely the names of countries that involved in the air accident and search operation. A point worth nothing is the keyword '*Israel*' in the Malaysian comments. Based on one of the MH370 conspiracy theories, Israeli agents planned to crash flight MH370 into a building, as in the September 11 attacks in New York (*The Week News*, 2018). More outlandishly,

there were rumours claiming that Israel had a plane identical to MH370 in storage in Tel Aviv (*The Week News*, ibid). In this case, '*Israel*' could be considered as a negative value, indicating the possibility of terrorism being involved in the tragedy of MH370. This possibility again points to a more negative attitude among the Malaysian students towards the MH370 air accident. In this category, the UK students made very few mentions of country/nationality in their comments. Their keywords comprised merely '*Malaysia*', '*Australia*' and '*international*', presumably reflecting the greater involvement of some countries in the air tragedy.

Fate

As we can see in Table 6.3, the category of fate was a much stronger association for the UK than the Malaysian students (Malaysia 5%, UK 12%). However, the analysis reveals that most of the keywords provided by the UK students were similar in this category; for example, '*tragedy*' (including '*tragic*') was mentioned 18 times in the UK comments. Based on the meaning of the keyword, the students seemed to agree that the disappearance of flight MH370 was an event causing great suffering, destruction and distress to people. In the Malaysian comments, keywords such as '*unfortunate*', '*unlucky*' and '*fate*' were used by students, indicating that the air crisis was to some extent a predetermined course of events, lying beyond the domain of human control. Overall, the two groups of students tended to portray the MH370 incident as an inevitable and distressing event. Hence, the keywords in this category can be labelled as negative.

Time / location, Social Actors, Nature and Communication

The categories of time/location (Malaysia 1%, UK 0%), social actors (Malaysia 1%, UK 0%), nature (Malaysia 4%, UK 4%) and communication (Malaysia 1%, UK 1%) are discussed together, as their percentages and salience are relatively minor. In other words, there were very few comments in these categories across the two respondent groups. Indeed, time/location and social actors are barely presented in the perceptions of the UK students. In these five categories, keywords generally focused on the time and distinctiveness of the incident (e.g. '*8th March*', '*first time*'), people who were involved in the tragedy (e.g. '*passengers*'), the environment (e.g. '*circumstances*', '*weather*', '*ocean*'), and communication and technology (e.g. '*communication*', '*satellite*'). In spite of the low salience of these categories, it is nevertheless notable that there were some reflective comments which focused on time, location and people in the incident, suggesting a somewhat neutral view of the MH370 tragedy among the two groups of respondents.

Combining all the findings above, several overall points can be made. Firstly, the two groups of respondents generally shared the same perceptions of MH370 in terms of conflict and emotions. Secondly, the Malaysian students used more emotional words and expressed stronger criticisms, while the UK students offered more reflections on the tragedy and favoured sentiment over judgement. Thirdly, the Malaysian students provided coverage of a wider range of topics whilst the UK students focused mostly on conflict and emotions arising from the air crisis.

The analysis also indicates that many of the UK students provided similar comments in term of emotions, showing their attempts to empathise with distant sufferers. However, during the data collection, many of the UK students revealed their inability to decipher and recognise details of the suffering. These observations lead to questions regarding the reasons for the students to express greater emotions when they could not even remember the incident concerned. Here we can refer to the notion of 'pity' proposed by Chouliaraki (2012: 113). According to Chouliaraki, pity does not refer to natural sentiments of empathy and tender-heartedness towards a spectacle of human pain, but rather to a moral obligation for the spectator to respond to a sufferer's misfortune in public. Boltanski (1999: 12) also asserted that public responses to distant sufferings are not a technical consequence of modern means of communication at home. Similarly, Huiberts & Joye (2017) claimed that people are less capable of empathising with mediated suffering when they do not experience a more personal connection to the suffering. Therefore, it can be argued that shared experience and geographical distance from the suffering is important in determining the audiences' engagement with a disaster.

Prior research has tended to demonstrate that audiences are likely to react differently to different types of suffering (e.g. Huiberts & Joye, 2017; Kyriakidou, 2014; Höijer, 2004). Thus, it is important to explore the students' attitudes to different examples of suffering (e.g. MH370 and MH17) to determine if the two tragedies mean similar or different things to the local and distant university students. It is crucial to mention that these two air tragedies differed in terms of date of occurrence, cause, nationality of passengers, location of the flight and its schedule and planned destination. Hence, the analysis of the tragedy of MH17 could provide useful insights into the study of attitudes to different cases of suffering using the keyword technique. The following section discusses the students' attitudes to the MH17 tragedy.

6.3.3 Attitude towards the tragedy of MH17

Having discussed the results for the tragedy of MH370, this section provides an analysis of the keywords of the MH17 tragedy provided by the same group of respondents.

Using the same data analysis method, the keywords provided by the respondents were grouped into ten semantic categories (as summarised in Appendix 4). Before considering the keywords in the various semantic categories, the total numbers of keywords and percentages of each category were calculated (as shown in table 6.6). The semantic categories identified for MH17 were very similar to those for MH370, implying that the two tragedies were mostly associated with conflict (Malaysia 40%, UK 42%) and emotional effects (Malaysia 21%, UK 33%). Despite the similarity, there were some differences between the two tragedies in the keywords given by respondents. A more in-depth discussion of the keywords for MH17 is given in the following section.

Table 6.6 (Numbers) and percentages of total keywords by Malaysian and UK respondents in each semantic category (percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole) – MH17.

| Keywords of MH17 | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Malaysia | UK |
| Respondents (n=50) | Keywords: n=150 | Keywords: n=150 |
| Conflict | (60) 40% | (64) 42% |
| Emotion/Experience | (32) 21% | (50) 33% |
| Aircraft related matters | (6) 4% | (0) 0% |
| Moral/Religion | (7) 5% | (0) 0% |
| Law/Politics | (9) 6% | (7) 5% |
| Country/Nationality | (19) 13% | (7) 5% |
| Time/Location | (2) 1% | (1) 1% |
| Social Actors | (4) 3% | (4) 2% |
| Communication | (0) 0% | (1) 1% |
| Fate | (11) 7% | (16) 11% |

Conflict

Many keywords in this category can reasonably be assumed to convey negative connotations (e.g. '*terrorism*', '*war*', '*inhuman*', '*attacked*'). Arguably, the Malaysian and UK students expressed clear signs of disapproval about conflict in the MH17 tragedy. As revealed in Table 6.6, the frequencies of such comments among the two groups of respondents are similar (Malaysia 40%, UK 42%). A further analysis of the subcategories of conflict (see table 6.7) indicates that keywords related to terrorism were strongly represented in the Malaysian and UK comments (Malaysia 60%, UK 63%). This example is revealed in lexical choices such as '*war*', '*violence*', '*murder*', '*bombing*', '*aggression*', '*crime*', '*illegal*' and '*cruel*', indicating that the MH17 tragedy was a terrorist attack. In addition, the UK students also expressed condemnation (5%) for the acts of terrorism, such as '*pointless*', '*thoughtless*' and '*mindless*', which may suggest that the shooting down of flight MH17 was irrational and foolish.

Table 6.7 (Numbers) and percentages of total keywords by Malaysian and UK respondents in the conflict subcategories (percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole) – MH17.

| | MALAYSIA | UK |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Keywords: n=60 | Keywords: n=64 |
| Enigma | (6) 10% | (14) 22% |
| Flaws | (7) 12% | (2) 3% |
| Destruction | (11) 18% | (5) 7% |
| Terrorism | (36) 60% | (40) 63% |
| Condemnation | (0) 0% | (3) 5% |

Arguably, the evaluative tone of UK respondents in this category was relatively negative, comprising overt criticism. This finding could be due to the fact that the flight was shot down and crashed over eastern Ukraine, implying a closer geographical distance between the UK students and the suffering involved when compared to the tragedy of MH370. It is also crucial to mention that, during data collection, the students appeared to be more familiar with the MH17 tragedy and needed less prompting from the researcher. This observation could once again confirm the students' greater concern about the MH17 tragedy.

Given the findings reported in the tragedy of MH370 regarding the high salience of condemnation among Malaysian students, it is surprising to find that condemnation

is barely mentioned by the students in relation to the tragedy of MH17 (0%). Indeed, the Malaysian students were more focused on destruction (18%), flaws (12%) and the enigma (10%) of the MH17 tragedy. Interestingly, one of the Malaysian students made reference to a specific issue of MH17 concerning the need to ‘*save fuel*’. Given that MH17 had taken a shortcut across the disputed area of eastern Ukraine, there was speculation that the pilot was trying to save fuel (Boyle, 2014). Apparently, the students made the connection from the rumour, indicating that the root of the disaster was a mistake made by the pilot. In addition, keywords such as ‘*mistake*’ and ‘*careless*’ were also used in the comments, seemingly to suggest that the air crisis was a tragedy caused by human error.

Emotion / experience

In this category, the UK students, again, utilised more emotional words in contrast to the Malaysian students (UK 21%, Malaysia 33%). Given that this category comprised various emotions, the researcher considered the keywords within the category more closely so as to identify the relative salience of each emotion among the two groups of respondents (as summarised in table 6.8).

Table 6.8 (Numbers) and percentages of total keywords by Malaysian and UK respondents in each of the emotion/experience subcategories (percentage are rounded up or down to the nearest whole) – MH17.

| | MALAYSIA | UK |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| | N= 32 | N= 50 |
| Sadness | (17) 53% | (18) 36% |
| Fear | (11) 34 % | (19) 38% |
| Anger | (0) 0% | (13) 26% |
| Curiosity | (4) 13% | (0) 0% |

As can be seen from Table 6.8, the Malaysian students expressed greater sadness about the air crisis (53%) while the UK students were more fearful about the shooting down of flight MH17 (38%). In the UK comments, a range of keywords were used, for example ‘*worrying*’, ‘*scary*’, ‘*appalling*’, ‘*threatening*’ and ‘*shocking*’, to depict the air tragedy as an unpleasant event filled with threat, danger and harm. Potentially, there was a high level of fear of the probability of a future threat. In contrast, keywords such as ‘*sad*’ and ‘*sorrow*’ were frequently mentioned in the Malaysian comments, presumably referring to the impact of the air crisis in terms of loss, pain and suffering.

The findings suggest that the UK students were likely to focus on the attack itself, considering the air tragedy as something horrible, whereas the Malaysian students tended to pay more attention to human suffering, sharing the pain of the people involved in the air tragedy.

In addition, the Malaysian students also exhibited curiosity about the incident such as '*surprise*' and '*curious*' (13%). Generally, these keywords indicate something unexpected and unusual. Therefore, the keywords in this category cannot be labelled as unambiguously negative. In contrast, curiosity received relatively less attention from the UK students (0%). Furthermore, it is striking to notice that anger was not clearly represented in the Malaysian comments (0%). Perhaps there is a link with the findings reported above regarding the low salience of condemnation among the Malaysian students. Even though the Malaysian students paid greater attention to terrorism (see Table 6.7), issues surrounding condemnation and anger were not clearly present in their comments. Potentially, the geographical distance between the air accident and the Malaysian students could have restricted their engagement with the incident. In a different vein, the UK students appeared to express anger explicitly through the words '*upset*', '*annoyed*' and '*outrage*' (26%). Such comments suggest a strong disapproval of the actions in shooting down the aircraft and killing all the people on board. In comparison to the disappearance of MH370, the tragedy of MH17 seemed to provoke greater anger among the UK students. The finding provides further indication that the proximity of the event to the home country had a substantial impact on anger among the respondents.

According to Huiberts & Joye (2017: 9), 'the proximity of an event and cultural similarity enabled people to better emotionally imagine what the distant sufferer is going through, leading to a sense of shared or overlapping experience'. In the present study, the proximity of the crash site (Ukraine) and the nationality of passengers on board (British and European) appeared to have a substantial impact not only on news coverage but also on the engagement of the UK students with the air crisis. As we can see, the UK students showed more emotion and stronger criticisms in relation to the tragedy of MH17 compared to the MH370 air accident. Therefore, these results can suggest that geographical distance and perceived cultural similarities were important in determining the students' attitudes toward the air crises.

Law / politics

It is observed that the two groups of respondents made connections with the law and politics (Malaysia 6%, UK 5%). In the Malaysian comments, '*politics*' was mentioned, indicating political involvement in the incident. The comments appear to be rather abstract, and could refer to any activities involving the governance of any country. In addition, the Malaysian students also mentioned '*innocent*' in their comments. This keyword seemingly refers to the victims who were not responsible for the event yet suffering its consequences; thus, it can be considered to convey negative connotations. With regard to the UK comments, keywords such as '*justice*', '*law*', '*politics*' and '*responsibility*' were mentioned, potentially to reinforce the urgent need for legal action to bring an end to the suffering. Based on the aforementioned observations, the UK students often expressed fear and anger in response to the attack. This perhaps helps to explain why the UK students made connections to '*justice*' and the '*law*' which were seen as likely to be the solution to the air crisis and to end the violence. This provides evidence in support of Chouliaraki's (2004) claim that feelings of the unfairness of and indignation about terrorist acts should provoke appeals to justice.

Likewise, Horberg et al. (2011: 238) also argued that anger is associated with justice concerns in terms of fairness, autonomy and human rights. The emphasis in these previous studies helps to explain the connection between the keywords and the air tragedy, reflecting the students' emotion and attitudes toward the issue of terrorism. Essentially, the connection between anger and justice could also be applied to the Malaysian comments. As one can see from the previous discussion, the Malaysian students tended to show no sign of anger toward the attack and, in turn, made no reference to justice.

The differences in word choices by the two groups of students reveal that the Malaysian students were more concerned with the victims, as indicated by the keyword '*innocent*' which highlights the tragic fate of the passengers on board. Conversely, the UK students paid relatively more attention to the perpetrators, as demonstrated by '*responsibility*' and '*law*', seemingly referring to punishment against the perpetrators.

Country / nationality

In general, the keywords in this category carried no overt negative or positive connotations, providing only location details of the event such as the crash site (e.g.

'*Ukraine*') and departure information (e.g. '*Netherlands*'). However, from a more critical perspective, these keywords could potentially suggest the different roles of the countries involved in the event. For instance, '*Russia*' and '*Ukraine*' were both accused of shooting down flight MH17, pointing to the presence of crime and terrorism in this category. Since '*Ukraine*' could refer to both the crash site and the criminals responsible for shooting down flight MH17, it is hard to decide if it carried merely negative value. Therefore, in this respect, the other keywords alongside '*Ukraine*' were analysed to determine if there is a clear sense of neutrality or negativity that pervades the accompanying items. Interestingly, some of the comments show that '*Ukraine*' was accompanied by country terms such as '*Netherlands*' and '*Russia*', expressing a fairly neutral value. At the same time, *Ukraine* was also found alongside items like '*shooting*', '*irresponsible*' and '*mistake*' which can arguably be interpreted as involving a more negative judgement. Looking closely at the comments in the questionnaire responses, '*Ukraine*' seems to carry both neutral and negative values in the Malaysian and UK comments. Therefore, in this case, '*Ukraine*' can be considered as an ambiguous term that blends neutral and negative values, and whose primary value differed according to different individual points of view.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, '*Russia*' was found to be surrounded by a range of negative words such as '*shot down*', '*deliberately*', '*terrorism*', '*cruel*', '*illegal*' and '*war*'. Arguably, the students held negative views of the country in relation to the air crisis. Indeed, both the Malaysian and UK respondents offered fairly similar comments alongside '*Russia*' (as indicated in the examples provided above), which may again indicate a negative attitude of the respondents towards Russia. Thus far, the two groups of students expressed both neutral and negative attitudes in this category depending on the role of the country involved in the tragedy.

Social Actors

Table 6.6 indicates that this category does not carry a high level of salience (Malaysia 3%, UK 2%). Nevertheless, keywords such as '*passenger*', '*victims*', '*friend of mine*', '*families*' and '*Newcastle fans*' were mentioned. A point worth noting is the uncommon term, '*Newcastle fans*', which was mentioned by three UK students in the context of MH17. It should be clarified that Newcastle United fans John Alder and Liam Sweeney, who were on their way to New Zealand to watch a pre-season friendly, were among the victims killed when flight MH17 was shot down. Hence, the keywords seemingly described these two victims. In this respect, the keyword not only suggests the identity of the victims but also implied a social interactive process that involves

sharing pain which, in turn, renders compassion and pity concerning the incident. In other words, the UK students connected the domestic case to global suffering, leading to a sense of shared experience. Most importantly, the data collection was carried out at Northumbria University which is situated in Newcastle. Thus, this close distance was likely to enhance the students' attention to the victims. This interpretation again is consistent with the findings of Huiberts & Joye's (2017: 12) study which indicated that experiential overlap or shared experience could easily facilitate a sense of care.

Likewise, a Malaysian student made a connection to a '*friend of mine*', suggesting a close relationship between this respondent and one of the victims. In addition, the keywords also revealed the pain of losing a loved one. Although the keywords in this category seemingly referred to the people killed in the air crisis, focusing on human suffering, it is nevertheless a relatively neutral category overall. Apart from the term '*victims*' which generally denotes the idea of injury, harming and killing, a majority of the keywords literally referred to the identities or relationships of people, such as '*passenger*', '*families*', '*friend*' and '*fans*'. Looking closely at the choice of words, we may quite clearly recognise the mode of sentiment, focusing on the suffering of the victims and developing the feeling of empathy.

Fate

In the category of fate, the researcher included keywords specifically referring to the outcome of the air tragedy seen as being outside of human control (e.g. '*fate*', '*unfortunate*' '*coincidence*' and '*unlucky*') and others referring to the outcome of the event as causing extreme distress or sorrow (e.g. '*tragedy*' and '*tragic*'). Keywords in this category were mentioned slightly more often by the UK than the Malaysian students (Malaysian 7%, UK 11%). In the UK comments, the keyword '*tragedy*' (included '*tragic*') was mentioned 14 times, whereas '*unlucky*' and '*coincidence*' were only mentioned once in each instance. Apparently, the MH17 incident was more likely to be perceived as an event causing great suffering than a natural disaster among the UK students. Conversely, the keywords '*unfortunate*' and '*unlucky*' were mentioned three times in each instance in the Malaysian comments, ascribing the air crisis to factors which we do not control. In short, the finding suggests that the shooting down of flight MH17 was a matter of fate. Notwithstanding the small numbers of keywords in this category, it is nevertheless notable that the keywords were related to the sad fate and negative impacts of the air tragedy, again implying a negative view of the MH17 air accident in the two groups of students.

Others

The categories of aircraft-related (Malaysia 4%, UK 0%), morality/religion (Malaysia 5%, UK 0%), time/location (Malaysia 1%, UK 1%) and communication (Malaysia 0%, UK 1%) keywords were relatively small for the MH17 tragedy. Hence these categories are discussed together. The keywords apparently included no explicit commentary nor evaluation, only the time of the incident (e.g. '17th July 2014'), the airline and route of the flight (e.g. 'MAS', 'no fly zone') with no terms relating to communication. Nevertheless, some interesting comments were observed in these categories. For instance, one of the Malaysian respondents described MH17 as 'MH370 (2)', suggesting that these two air tragedies shared the same characteristics, particularly their sad fate. In terms of morality/religion, a fairly positive word '*faith*' was provided by a Malaysian student. This term may relate to two different phenomena, the first regarding patience and hope in the investigation of the air disaster. The second relates to prayer for the passengers and crew of flight MH17, focusing on compassion and unity. Regardless of the events, the keywords which potentially indicate hope, confidence and compassion suggest a positive attitude towards aspects of the tragedy of MH17.

In addition, it is also observed that, issues related to these categories received relatively little attention from the UK students. Table 6.6 shows that this is likely to be due to the students prominently mentioning conflict and emotion/experience, neglecting other issues surrounding the air tragedy. In sum, the findings reveal low levels of salience in these categories, especially considering that the frequencies of keywords in each category were less than 5%. But although these keywords would make no difference to the overall patterns of positivity and negativity found across the data sets, they nevertheless suggest a tendency among the Malaysian students to maintain some hope after the second air disaster.

6.4 Summary

Overall, the analysis of data from Malaysian and UK students reveals broadly negative attitudes towards the air tragedies. The students seemingly expressed strong disapproval concerning conflict arising from the tragedies. Even though the UK and Malaysian students seemed to share similar attitudes by focusing predominantly on conflict and matters related to emotion, there are important distinctions to be made in their word choices. Looking closely at their comments, the UK students seemed to engage more with the MH17 air tragedy compared to the disappearance of flight

MH370. Conversely, the Malaysian students tended to place more emphasis on the tragedy of MH370 than the MH17 crisis. These results suggest a tendency for the students to pay more attention to the tragedy that was geographically closer to their home country. As stated by Huiberts & Joye (2017), the spectator tends to prioritise news based on the involvement of their home country. In addition, events that happen closer to home could provoke a far more emotional engagement than events that occur further away (Huiberts & Joye, *ibid*).

Chapter 6 has presented detailed analyses of the keywords collected from the questionnaire responses. In addition, some preliminary comments about the findings obtained have been offered. The following chapter provides a more in-depth discussion of the data and findings from each section of the research instrument in relation to the research questions.

Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This discussion chapter begins with an in-depth consideration of the findings described in chapters 5 and 6 based on the research questions introduced earlier in the thesis. It should be noted that, as the findings have been discussed in an earlier chapter, a degree of overlap is unavoidable in the discussion of each of the research questions. In addition, the methodological and empirical contributions of this study are covered in this chapter. Finally, some problems that have been encountered in this study are discussed in conjunction with potential areas for future research.

7.2 Research question one (a): How were keywords used to represent the disappearance of the Flight MH370 and what does this reveal about differences and similarities in media reporting about the flight in the two countries?

The keyword analysis shows that topics related to 'aircraft-related matters', 'name/title', 'social actors', 'country/nationality', 'actions', 'consequences', 'nature' and 'time/location' were important in the reporting of MH370 compared to a more general context. In particular, the Malaysian and UK news corpora were dominated by aircraft-related matters. Unsurprisingly, these keywords were generally used to refer to the MH370 airplane, its control system and objects related to the crisis. However, the results of a detailed concordance analysis show a noticeable divergence between Malaysian and UK news reporting about the disappearance of MH370.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the news frames regarding the missing flight. Firstly, the Malaysian news reporting was mostly descriptive and did not critically theorise the cause and facts of the air accident. This finding supports the results of Pasquare & Pozzetti's (2007) study which identified a lack of scientific explanations of a local disaster in newspapers. Pasquare & Pozzetti provided an explanation of the result, indicating that a lack of expertise among journalists could have prevented them from providing more in-depth information pertaining to the cause of the incident. Another possible explanation for this result is that political control over the news media would have deterred journalists from carrying out an independent investigation (Netto, 2002: 18) so as to provide a more detailed explanation of the air crisis.

Secondly, the Malaysian newspapers demonstrated a conservative approach and abided by traditional norms by citing statements and speeches from the authorities. The keywords used were observed to be associated mainly with the reporting of the search operations and efforts taken by the government to locate the missing aircraft. Malaysian newspapers provided a sharp contrast to the voices found in the UK news media. Most specifically, the Malaysian ministers who were awarded 'expert status' comprised the majority of those making claims in the Malaysian newspapers. As one can see from the aforementioned observations (see Section 5.4), local ministers were largely associated with SAR and other investigation teams. Indeed, their voices were more visible in comparison to those of investigators such as Inmarsat or Air France. Moreover, issues related to the victims' wellbeing were also largely reported through the voices of local authorities. This finding provides evidence in support of Widener & Gunter (2007) and Cox et al.'s (2008) conclusions which indicated the presence of discourses of expertise in the news reporting of a crisis, potentially used to shift attention away from pain and grief to recovery.

Thirdly, the disappearance of flight MH370 was constructed as a collective experience of shock and grief (see concordance 6, chapter 5). As stated by Gortner & Pennebaker (2003: 581), 'social sharing' allows individuals to construct a collective script of the disaster, helping them to cope with the pain of losing their loved ones. In the study of discourses of resilience to natural disasters in Australian newspapers, Leitch & Bohensky (2014) argued that media discourses tend to pay less attention to learning from the disasters, but place value on sharing experience. This finding has been reflected in the present study. For instance, information pertaining to learning from past experience and knowledge of the air disaster, and avoiding mistakes in the future, were largely lacking in the Malaysian newspapers. At the same time, notions of sympathy and collective spirit were frequently promoted through the texts. However, Leitch & Bohensky (2014) asserted that learning from experience may depend on the intensity and frequency of a disaster. For instance, regular disasters such as flooding leads to a different kind of experience compared to more dramatic disasters like bush fires. Given that the missing flight MH370 has remained a mystery since 2014, the incident can be considered as a bizarre disaster. Therefore, a lack of experience with the disaster (Leitch & Bohensky, 2014, Alexander, 2006) could prevent the media from supporting individual and social learning from it. This helps to explain why the media paid less attention to the learning process but placed more emphasis on human interest.

In a different vein, the British press demonstrated a more critical stance in reporting the tragedy, and attention was paid to the potential facts, theories and history that could explain the cause of the plane being missing. Even though the disappearance of MH370 was extremely unusual, the UK news media managed to provide more thorough information regarding possible causes of the incident. For instance, issues related to 'stolen passports' were mentioned frequently in news articles to explain one potential cause, although this information was not highlighted in the Malaysian news corpus. The analysis reveals not only independent reporting but also the expertise of journalists in the analysis of the MH370 crisis, pointing to the validity and accuracy of their information. The analysis of the UK newspapers suggests a more in-depth and comprehensive news coverage in managing disaster that placed greater weight on risk reduction rather than merely reacting to the impacts of the disaster (Alexander, 2006: 17).

In addition, the presentation of the Malaysian authorities was rather different in the UK newspapers compared with the Malaysian press. According to Allaz & Cedraschi (2015: 26), perceived injustice and anger could contribute to the attribution of blame. In this respect, the Malaysian authorities were criticised by the UK news media for delaying the release of information and providing conflicting details of the search, and thus provoking anger among the relatives. The blame discourse could suggest an unfavourable representation of the Malaysian government as a negative 'other'. Based on the examples provided in concordance 7 (see chapter 5), the Malaysian government's cover up, denial, and refusal, as well as an inability to take control of the investigation, further underline this negative presentation of the 'other'. *The Daily Telegraph* also quoted former pilot Chris Goodfellow's statement, claiming that Malaysian authorities should surrender control of the investigation to Britain (The Daily Telegraph, June 16, 2014). This reporting further cultivated a division between 'Britain' as an in-group, identified as responsible and expert and 'Malaysia' as the out-group identified as incapable and unreliable. As indicated in Doulton & Brown's (2009) study of discourses of climate change and international development in the UK press, developing countries and the poor who are facing disasters are often portrayed as hapless victims who can only be helped by rich Western countries.

The results of previous studies (such as Gortner & Pennebaker, 2003; Hossain, 2015; Papacharissi & de Fatima, 2008, and Joye, 2009, 2010), have offered several reasons to help explain the differences in word choices and constructions between the Malaysian and UK news media pertaining to the air tragedy in the present study.

Firstly, the UK was not directly involved in the air crises, whereas Malaysia was directly affected based on the numbers of victims and ownership of the aircraft. Thus, the Malaysian news media generally put more emphasis on human interest compared to the UK newspapers. Secondly, the different levels of press freedom between Malaysia and the UK could have contributed to the use of different word choices to construct the air tragedy. According to the BBC News¹, Malaysia has some of the toughest censorship laws in the world, and the Malaysian authorities can exert substantial control over the media and impose restrictions in the name of national security. Additionally, a 2015 report by Freedom House² about the freedom of the press showed that the UK press was categorised as 'free' whereas newspapers in Malaysia were considered to be 'not free'. For this reason, UK journalists may enjoy more freedom to discuss the causes and impacts, including mismanagement, of the air disaster, while Malaysian newspapers were more focused on local events and political elites. Thirdly, the geographical distance between the tragedy and the countries involved is likely to affect the extent of any coverage of human suffering. In other words, proximity creates greater newsworthiness (Joye, 2010: 594) compared to that of distant sufferers.

7.3 Research question one (b): How were keywords used to represent the shooting down of the Flight MH17 and what does this reveal about differences and similarities in media reporting about the flight in the two countries?

Based on the 50 most frequent keywords, ten topics were identified in the news construction of the shooting down of flight MH17. Additionally, most of the topics found were similar to the tragedy of MH370, such as 'aircraft-related matters', 'name/title', 'social actors', 'country/nationality', 'actions', 'consequences' and 'time/location'. What is perhaps more remarkable is the emergence of two new topics ('law' and 'war-related matters') in the context of MH17. These findings suggest a different focus of the news media in reporting the two air tragedies.

Overall, there is both noticeable convergence and divergence between the Malaysian and the UK reporting of the MH17 crisis. In terms of the similarities, the previous tragedy MH370 was regularly mentioned in both corpora. The coverage of MH370 may have made that past incident live again for newsreaders and audiences, creating an emotional connection between MH370 and MH17. The news media to an extent used the MH370 event to frame, contextualise and rationalise the MH17 event. According to Hoskins & O'Loughlin (2007: 111), news media 'keep past events alive

and dynamic within current news agendas'. However, through a detailed concordance analysis, the framing of 'MH370' seemed to differ in the Malaysian and UK news media.

In the Malaysian news media, 'MH370' was used not only to present the shock of the air disaster which had happened months ago, but also to promote a particular future course of action based on the lessons of that history. In this case, the need for unity of purpose even in the circumstances of the double loss of Malaysian lives, was emphasised in the newspapers (see concordance 19). In the UK news media, 'MH370' was by contrast negatively depicted in conjunction with the government's inefficiency in managing the past event (see concordance 20). The presentation of the Malaysian government's inability to take control of the crisis suggested a negative construction of the 'other' who was less capable in comparison to 'us' (the UK).

The analysis of semantic categories also pointed to a political discourse in the construction of MH17. This discourse was presented differently within the two news corpora. The Malaysian news media, in particular, was observed to reproduce a hegemonic political position by privileging the representation of Malaysian ministers for audiences. The aforementioned analysis has shown that the news articles were dominated by speeches made and actions taken by local ministers, indicating their substantial practical engagement in the crisis. In addition, the coverage of MH17 increasingly gave expressive authority to ministers and officials, rather than the victims of the disaster. Hence, the analysis could suggest that the suffering discourse of MH17 was more likely to contribute to the empowerment of the local government involved in the disaster; showing their power, ability and skills in managing the crisis.

A different scenario was observed in the UK news corpus. Malaysian politicians were absent from the keyword list within UK news reporting more generally. The absence of Malaysian politicians is felt to have an important ideological significance, as the UK news media commonly categorised Malaysia as the unknown or unfamiliar 'other'. In fact, the overt framing of western politicians (e.g. 'Obama' and 'Cameron') further cultivated a sharp contrast between 'us' (the West) and the 'other' (Malaysia). This finding provides evidence in support of Joye's (2009, 2010) conclusion that what is missing or excluded in disaster coverage is mainly misfortune (e.g. suffering) affecting the distant other in developing countries, hence reflecting existing global power relations and hierarchies.

The keywords analysis revealed further differences and similarities between the Malaysian and UK news corpora, including in the discourse of suffering. In the Malaysian news articles, the reporters presented the audience with local suffering as a cause of concern and practical action. According to Anderson (2015: 3), the visibility of suffering naturally leads to considerations of actions and solutions for the relief of suffering. In the present study, the discourse of suffering was juxtaposed with promises and efforts to bring the criminals who shot down flight MH17 to justice. This may allow a rhetorical shift from pain to hope and national pride. As suggested by Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen (2011), shifting attention from sufferers to heroes enables a healing process to take place to move from despair to hope. Therefore, this analysis suggests that the presentation of the discourse of suffering in Malaysian newspapers was generally accompanied by positive outcomes for the purpose of recovery.

In a different vein, the discourse of distant suffering was not frequently presented in the UK news media. Distant suffering was briefly covered in the British press as indicated through the keywords '*victims*' and '*disaster*'. However, the presentation of the victims was rather brief and focused mainly on the identification of the victims' bodies. Their family members received relatively less attention from the media. In other words, the shared experience of the distant other was not deemed to be a cause for concern or action. As the discourse of suffering did not receive much attention from the media, the involvement of the public was logically non-existent. As indicated by Berry et al. (2007: 35), the media have the power to sway public perceptions by choosing what to publish and the context in which to present information. In the present study, there was possibly a lack of interaction between UK journalists and Malaysians in terms of politics and humanitarian concerns. This does not support Höjjer's (2004) claim that there is a growing focus on distant human suffering in the West's media. Instead, the analysis in the present study indicates that the UK news media paid relatively less attention to the distant sufferers as well as the politicians, as if they were not important to the UK audiences.

In addition, in the construction of war-related issues, western (self-) interest was often presented in the UK news corpus. As suggested by Chouliaraki (2006), the presentation of distant human suffering is usually based on criteria of relevance and closeness to the Western centre. This is clearly shown in the present study, in that the UK news media paid more attention to Russian terrorism which was more likely to affect European economic interests. This was also observed in the news articles, in which statements such as '*hurt British business*' and '*the UK needed to be ready*'

to suffer financially' were made to explain the economic impact of sanctions on Russia. Therefore, Chouliaraki's statement clearly explains the focus of the UK news media on Russia as a matter of closeness and relevancy to the country.

The lack of coverage of the distant sufferers in the British press could be linked to the particularly high emphasis of the media on a terrorism discourse. As discussed earlier, the deliberate selection of war and military vocabulary to label Putin and Russia was evident in the UK newspapers. By connecting the war explicitly with Russia, the UK news media induced the western audiences to assign responsibility and blame to Russia. This result parallels the findings in Hossain's (2015) study, which found that the UK media are likely to cover military-conflict issues. However, the finding differs from those of previous studies (e.g. Hossain 2015; Gerhards & Schäfer, 2014, Papacharissi & de Fatima, 2008; Dimitrova & Connolly-Ahern, 2007) in a few important respects. Firstly, *according to* Höijer (2004: 513), there is a growing focus on human suffering in relation to distant crises and wars in the Western media. However, the present results show that the UK news media paid more attention to war and military issues rather than human suffering. In other words, the news media appeared to favour the perpetrators over the victims.

Secondly, the findings of the study do not fully support the suggestion that the UK press produce coverage of war neutrally (Dimitrova & Connolly-Ahern, 2007) or around diplomatic evaluations of terrorist events (Papacharissi & de Fatima, 2008). Based on Papacharissi & de Fatima's (2008) findings, word choices in the UK news reports were simple and plainly descriptive, and epithet use was sparse. In addition, the focus of the reporting was strictly factual and the tone was relatively tempered. They believed their results were due to the market orientation of the papers. In a similar vein, Gerhards & Schäfer (2014) argued that the representation of victims was a most important aspect of reporting in the UK media, but in contrast, the perpetrators in this study received very little attention from journalists. Unlike previous studies, the present study suggests that the UK news media were critical of war-related matters in the shooting down of flight MH17 through their selection of lexical items and portrayals. In fact, the word choice in the UK press appeared to focus heavily on political conflict, war, crime and perpetrators corresponding to the tragedy, suggesting that the news coverage was more dramatic and conflict-filled. *Similarly, previous research on disasters by* van Belle (2000), Thussu (2004), Joye (2009, 2010) and Yan & Bissell (2015), found a tendency for the negative presentation of distant suffering in the Western media, focusing largely on striking and conflict-oriented

issues. Galtung & Ruge (1965) also noted that negative events like war and crime carry more factors denoting newsworthiness than positive stories.

In the Malaysian news corpus, terrorism discourse was less clearly presented. Indeed, while government actions and human rights issues were considered, the consequences for the Malaysian people were also of primary importance. According to Chouliaraki (2010: 120), portraying sufferers as victims could produce a universal discourse of justice. Similarly, Boltanski (1999: 5) argued that for 'a politics of pity, the urgency of the action needing to be taken to bring an end to the suffering involved always prevails over considerations of justice'. The analysis in the present study provides evidence in support of Chouliaraki and Boltanski's conclusions, showing that the victims and the beavered were regularly described with regards to '*justice*' in the newspapers. In other words, the Malaysian news media seemed to exhibit humanitarian concerns, indicating the need for justice to prevent and control acts of terrorism. Despite the media often focusing on justice, the identities of the criminals were not clearly revealed. This invisibility of the criminals suggests a greater concern on the part of the government as well as the news media in defining and revealing the agent who shot down flight MH17. In short, the Malaysian news media tended to focus on isolated acts of terrorism and the impact on the people, instead of adopting a global standpoint and analysing terrorism as a complex phenomenon.

Different results were obtained by Lean et al. (2013) in their study of the representation of terrorism crises (the London and Mumbai attacks) in Malaysian newspapers. They found that in Malaysia's mainstream newspapers, terrorism reports were dominated by the language of opposites, based on an underlying social categorisation in terms of 'us' versus 'them'. This categorisation can be classified into terms of 'non-terrorist' versus 'terrorist', or 'civilisation' versus 'barbarism'. On the one hand, the terrorists were constructed as uncivilised, subhuman and cowardly, and on the other they were portrayed as 'professional' planners and bombers. Apparently, the Malaysian journalists were more engaged in distant terrorism crises such as the London and Mumbai attacks rather than one involving the home country (the shooting down of flight MH17).

In the present study, there might have been reasons for the Malaysian newspapers to pay less attention to military conflict in the tragedy of MH17. The journalists may have considered the war specifically as a local issue inasmuch as Malaysia was directly involved in the terrorist attack and thus they focused less on the details of the

involvement of world powers such as Russia. As indicated by Wodak (2002: 164), the more sensitive the issue, the vaguer the identity discourse tends to become. Moreover, Papacharissi & de Fatima (2008: 71) also argued that government policy, institutional tendencies and the dominant journalism paradigm in each country could explain differences in the news coverage of terrorism crises. Therefore, it can be argued that factors such as national differences in the political landscape, the involvement of one's own country and the positions of political elites are important to journalists in interpreting attacks in the expression of factual matters or war (Hossain, 2015; Gerhards & Schäfer, 2014; Nossek, 2008).

Overall, the Malaysian and the UK news corpora show more differences than similarities in their construction of the MH17 air disaster. Presumably, the occurrence of the air disaster as local suffering for Malaysian news media and distant suffering to the UK press would have influenced their presentation of news. Several key findings are relevant here. Firstly, the Malaysian news corpus was dominated by discourses of both suffering and recovery, as was the case with Cox et al.'s (2008) results. Secondly, the present study also suggests that domestic political actions were strongly promoted in the news articles, indicating that there was a strong tendency towards political control over the news media in Malaysia. Thirdly, the discussion of MH17 was found to be rather general with a lack of detail, particularly concerning issues related to the shooting down of flight MH17.

Conversely, in the British press, a clear classification between 'us' (the West) and the 'other' (Malaysia) was frequently observed. This potentially supports Joye's (2010) finding that the news coverage of international crises constructs and maintains socio-cultural differences between 'us' and 'others'. The cause and logical consequence of this finding is the UK's political and economic self-interest in relation to the MH17 event. Moreover, the discourses of power and hierarchy were also reflected in the news corpus through narratives about the superior role of the US and UK in the global economy compared to Russia. The imperative mood surrounding speakers (*Obama* and *Cameron*) and the addressee (*Putin*) further confirmed the superior-inferior relationship between the US, UK and Russia (see concordances 29 & 30). As stated by Joye (2010: 598), global news coverage is permeated by such power relations of inequality in which the rich are valued more than the poor.

7.4 Research question two: In what ways (if any) is the discourse of 'Us' versus 'Others' are constructed in the UK and Malaysian newspapers?

The keywords analysis of the tragedies of MH370 and MH17 in the Malaysian and UK news corpora revealed that there was a strong tendency to portray the tragedies with a classification between 'us' and 'other'. According to Valdivia (2017: 133), othering is a strategy that involves differentiating among individuals and groups and relegating them to the margins based on a range of socially constructed categories. Othering generally occurs via a range of practices from language differentiation to geographical assignation and native/non-native status, in which some characters are foregrounded while others are backgrounded.

As described in chapter 2, previous studies (e.g. Boltanski, 1999; Höjjer, 2004; Thussu, 2004; Chouliaraki, 2006; Moeller, 2006; Ashlin & Ladle, 2007; Joye, 2009, 2010) have suggested the presence of a classical division between 'us' and 'other' in the news reporting of tragedy. The division is generally based on the difference between 'lucky' or 'unfortunate', 'West' or 'Others', 'safety' or 'danger', 'prosperity' and 'poverty' and/or 'good' versus 'evil'. These scholars believe that the construction and maintenance of socio-cultural differences between 'us' and the 'other' is a reflection of global power hierarchies. The findings of the present study provide evidence to support the propositions made in previous research concerning the classification of 'us' and 'others' in the construction of news concerning tragedies. Based on the results of the keywords analysis, the differentiation between 'us' and 'others' was a feature of the two dominant naming discourses of honorification and anonymity.

According to Woods (2006: 129), the naming of events or people frequently leads to the establishment of assumptions and expectations about the character and nature of who or what has been named. Caldas-Coulthard (2003: 283) claimed that social actors can be included or excluded in media texts. If they are included, they can be personalised and categorised in terms of their identity (such as gender, social class, age, profession). In addition, they can also be nominated (given a name) formally or informally by using honorifics or personal names. Therefore, Caldas-Coulthard believed that social actors can be evaluated positively or negatively through nomination and honorification. In this respect, the findings of the present research highlight the effect of the two naming discourses of honorification and anonymity in creating and maintaining social divisions between 'us' and 'others' in the news construction of the air disasters. Generally, honorary titles are linguistic forms used

to signify deference towards the nominal referent or addressee (Shibatani, 2006: 381). In the use of anonymity, persons are vaguely, abstractly or metaphorically referred to and named (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001: 110). Each of these naming discourses is discussed further in the following sections.

i) *Honorification*

The disappearance of flight MH370 and the shooting down of flight MH17 both involved more than one country: China, Australia and Indonesia for the MH370 tragedy, and the Ukraine, Russia and Amsterdam for the MH17 tragedy. However, based on the keywords analysis, the Malaysian journalists often provided a more localised focus on the tragedies, framing the event mainly within a local context. For instance, the frequent use of Malaya honorific titles such as '*Datuk*', '*Seri*' and '*Tun*' in association with the names of the Malaysian politicians (e.g. '*Najib*', '*Hissamuddin*') suggest not only the superior status ascribed to and respect for the ministers but also reflect a domination of local government in the news coverage of the tragedies. These titles are awarded by the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* (the King) or by the Sultans, contributing to a further class stratification within the elites and middle class (Hamidon, 2014: 65). Neuliep (2018: 253) defined honorifics as linguistic forms that communicate respect based on the rank of the speaker and addresser. Additionally, Neuliep (ibid) also claimed that many Asian languages contain honorifics to highlight status differences and asymmetrical power relationships. In other words, status and power relations in a society can be grammatically marked through word or morpheme choices called honorifics (Keating, 2009: 998). Honorific language expresses degrees of deference, respect or distance, and creates social hierarchies within a society (Irvine, 1992: 252).

According to Dwi-Nugroho (2013: 45), the use of honorification can be the first indicator of representation, but relating it to other representational choices in news texts helps to reveal the ideologies behind the language. Hence, observing the use of honorific items as the first indicator, the present study shows that most of the international issues and events (e.g. Inmarsat) were mainly reported through the voice of the high-ranking Malaysian ministers. Seemingly, the news reports established local ministers as authoritative sources, capable of managing the international air accidents. This finding is in line with Nelson's (2006) and Don & Lee's (2014) observations that Malaysian newspapers often reflect the opinions of ruling groups, indicating the role of hegemony in the Malaysian news media.

More specifically, the present study further confirms Don & Lee's (2014) assertions that the use of honorification and affiliation to nominate political elites who express views from a national perspective, often involves a dichotomy between 'us' and 'others'. In a study of the representation of immigrants in the Malaysian news media, Don & Lee claimed that the Malaysian government was portrayed as having ethical responsibility to protect asylum seekers and refugees, who were themselves passivated as victims without any agency. A similar result was found in the present study. For instance, Malaysian government figures were not only ranked as important people through honorification, but were also presented as having the major responsibility to assist and help disaster victims who were not only passive but also disrespectful towards the government, as demonstrated in the tragedy of MH370. Although different social actors were brought into the text, such as victims, families and passengers, most of the commentary on relevant topics appeared to be restricted to people of higher social rank. The voices of the victims were largely absent.

In their study of othering, Kazakowska & Chovanec (2017: 4) claimed that an in-group usually involves a more powerful group that typically has privileged access to the mass media and holds certain symbolic capital in terms of honorification, prestige or recognition. At the same time, 'the other' is normally a group of people who do not have this privilege and who may only participate in semi-public contexts (such as online forums). Kazakowska & Chovanec believed that such discursive othering may be either an attempt to delimit the powerful group's own identity more sharply (for example, in response to migration) or to entrench its power (such as in responses to political instability). This helps to explain why coverage of elites was far more prominent in the Malaysian newspapers than of victims, presumably to establish the in-group's power in response to their mismanagement of disaster (see chapter 5).

In discourse analysis, it is crucial to consider what is absent and unclear in the construction of certain ideas (Fairclough, 2013: 103), because 'textual meaning is communicated as much by absence as by presence; as much by what is missing or excluded as by what is remembered and present' (Richardson, 2007: 93). In the Malaysian news corpus, the Malaysian elites' voices played a key role in constructing representations of the government as capable, efficient and accountable, which simultaneously presented the unheard victims as the 'other', as weak and passive. According to van Dijk (1993: 72), positive comparisons with other positive self-presentations and self-praise are common features in the discourse of political representatives. Moreover, such a presentation may function as a defence against

potential doubt or may be used to block negative comments from certain groups of people (van Dijk, *ibid*). In the case of MH370, the Malaysian government had been facing persistent criticism that the release of official information was inaccurate and inconsistent (Henderson, 2015). Thus, a self-praise strategy could be used to rebuild the public's trust in the Malaysian government. In the news corpus, self-praise by the higher ranking ministers was formulated in familiar terms of good leadership, such as being committed and never giving up the search. Crucially, the positive self-presentation was observed to be associated with negative attributions to lower ranked others. As demonstrated in concordance 12 (see chapter 5), the negative presentation of the 'other' implied that the relatives of the victims were ungrateful for the efforts made by the government, which in turn enhanced the alleged merits of Malaysia.

According to Cottle (2000: 2), the media is able to create space for the identities and interests of others to be resisted, changed or challenged through the construction of 'us' versus 'them' and 'normal' versus 'deviant'. In this respect, Spitzberg & Cadiz (2002) offered an explanation claiming that the media can bring unfavourable aspects about a victim to light which, in turn, affect the attribution of responsibility for a crisis. The importance of these emphases is further supported by Windsor et al. (2014: 452), who believed that shifting blame onto others using presentations of 'negative others' is a common tactic used to channel citizens' discontent toward local officials following a disaster, insulating leaders from culpability. In the present study, linguistic features concerning high-ranking ministers and distant victims ranked lower in news reports was observed to be rather contradictory. For instance, the ministers were described using positive words such as '*hard-work*', '*commitment*', '*appropriate*' and '*efforts*' whereas, the lower ranked 'others' were portrayed as '*irresponsible*', '*charlatans*', '*opportunists*' and '*narcissists*'. The language of blame and praise indicates the construction of a good 'us' and evil 'other' in the news reporting of the Malaysian airline tragedies, potentially functioning to shift blame from the mismanagement of government to ungrateful relatives and irresponsible rumour-mongers. In conclusion, the status-raising of the Ministers and status-lowering of the victims are clearly constructed in the news corpus through the use of honorific titles in conjunction with positive-self presentation and negative-other presentation. Such language and presentation suggest discrimination according to categories of 'us' and 'others'.

ii) *Anonymity*

In the UK news corpus, the two air tragedies were also found to construct socio-cultural differences between 'us' (the West) and the 'other' (Malaysia). Some studies have shown that Western media are likely to offer coverage of low quantity and quality of distant suffering from non-Western countries (e.g. Höijer, 2004; Thussu, 2004; Chouliaraki, 2006; Moeller, 2006; Ashlin & Ladle, 2007; Joye, 2009, 2010). Western reporting of distant suffering has been criticised for focusing too much on helpless victims and presenting them as lacking aspirations and competence; thus, implying a discourse of western superiority over the 'other' country. These scholarly accounts of western portrayals of distant suffering matched the findings revealed in the present study.

Some studies have found that 'giving a voice' and 'giving a name' to sufferers could bridge the distance between sufferer and witness, and essentially may increase the compassion of witnesses towards distant sufferers (e.g. Chouliaraki, 2006; Ong, J.C., 2015). The analysis in the present study revealed that the UK news media tended to portray the Malaysian ministers as the distant 'other', exemplified by the use of anonymity. According to Reisigl & Wodak (2001: 110), the linguistic presentation of groups of people and their activities, especially in relation to guilt or innocence, can be carried out by referentially identifying and naming individuals through proper names as well as by backgrounding or suppressing them. In this respect, 'personal pronouns' with vague referents, the complete omission of an agent, or passive constructions can be used to define an 'us-group' and 'enemy-group' (Reisigl & Wodak, *ibid*).

In the present study, the Malaysian ministers were constructed as '*authorities*', '*officials*' and '*ministers*', indicating their general roles in the air crisis rather than their personal identities. In other words, the specific identity of the subject appears to be open to interpretation. As stated earlier in concordance 7 (see chapter 5), the subjects were frequently associated with negative criticism for deliberately concealing information regarding the disappearance of flight MH370. In this case, the use of anonymous undefined pronouns serves to obscure who has purposely hidden or provided contradictory information. Additionally, since, the terms '*authorities*', '*officials*' and '*ministers*' imply a de-personalising and abstract perspective, one can easily make the anonymous agent the responsible social actor who performs dishonest or dubious practices. A similar result was revealed in Pope's (2017) study regarding the

UK news discourse on drones in Pakistan. In the study, Pope analysed the use of nomination in the naming of actors, objects, events, processes, actions or other phenomena in media texts. The findings suggested that the UK news media presentation of drone strikes is largely anonymous. Pope argued that failing to provide the names of locals or referring to them as 'tribesmen' or 'local people' can dehumanise the image of the people created for the readers. As a result, anonymity is effectively promoted through the omission of nomination.

The examination of the category of name/titles provided further indicative results. Keywords appeared in the category revealed that the UK, US and Russia ministers were given their names in the news articles such as 'Vladimir Putin', 'Cameron' and 'Obama'. Most importantly, Obama and Cameron's voices, described as markedly decisive and tough, were often presented through warnings to Putin for shooting down flight MH17. In addition, the narrative also reflected the superior position of the UK and US in managing the air crisis and seeking justice for the people while, the Malaysian ministers were potentially the 'other' who did not have a key role in taking action against Russia. These findings suggest a 'Western' vision of news media in their coverage of the Malaysian Airline tragedies, pointing to a social division between 'us' (the West: UK & US) and 'other' (Malaysia) through the use of anonymity and omission of the distant other.

It is also crucial to mention that, although Putin was given a name in the news corpus, he was largely presented as a criminal. At the same time, Cameron and Obama were portrayed as justice seekers. Similarly, in a study of the 'War on Terror', de Londras (2011) noted that both the US and the UK engaged in extreme 'othering' processes in the definition of 'the enemy'. Both countries seemingly made a concerted effort to identify Al Qaeda and its associates as a particularly 'deviant' kind of risk to society. At the same time, both the US and UK were actively presented as 'heroes' fighting for human rights. The results of the present study are in line with those of de Londras's study, showing that both the UK and US were presented as justice seekers fighting against the enemy (Putin).

The negative presentation of Russia could be due to anti-Russian sentiment or Russophobia in the UK. According to Taras (2014: 713), Russophobia includes anxiety or fear of Russia for its military power, or prejudice or hatred towards Russian political elites, culture, or people as a result of past trauma inflicted by it. In fact, the political resurgence of Russia under Vladimir Putin has resurrected Russophobia in

the West (Taras, *ibid*: 714). The Pew Trust's Global Attitudes Survey further shed light on fears about Russia (Vice, 2017). Overall, Russia's international image is more negative than positive. The US (71%) and Europe (73%) have particularly negative opinions about Russia, while negative views are slightly less prevalent in the Asia-Pacific region (63%). Moreover the survey revealed that Europeans are rather harsh in their comments towards Putin, with 78% expressing a lack of confidence in the leader. Again, in the Asia-Pacific region (e.g. Vietnam 79%, the Philippines 54%) more positive attitudes are expressed towards Putin's international performance (for more information, see Vice, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, anti-Russia stereotypes are rather common in the Western media (Matveeva, 2008). In the study of visual framing of the Ukraine conflict in Western European newspapers, Ojala et al. (2017) claimed that Putin was presented negatively in *The Guardian*. For instance, words with negative connotations such as '*brutish*', '*cronies*' and '*paranoia*' were present in the headlines alongside images of Putin. Hence, Ojala et al. concluded that both images and texts often contributed to perceptions of Putin or Russia as the negative 'other' compared with 'democratic' Western leaders such as Obama. All the findings discussed above help to explain the overt construction of Putin as the criminal in the present study. In consideration of issues of anti-Russian or Russophobia in conjunction with the findings of previous studies, the present study further confirms the construction of Russia as the negative 'other' in UK newspapers.

The analysis revealed that both Malaysian and Russian ministers were regularly portrayed as the 'other' in the UK news media. What is perhaps more remarkable is the Russia leader was given a name in the news articles whereas, the Malaysian ministers remained largely anonymous. The different forms of naming may point to different views on or expressions of those actors or events (Halliday, 1970) in the UK news media. Naming Putin in the newspapers could suggest attributing a more important role to him to the air tragedy or for the media. As stated by Chen (2016: 58), naming is commonly used to imply and highlight certain aspects of people or things that deserve attention. At the same time, the use of anonymity in the media, as found by Meadows (2001), could indicate that the actors are deemed less important to the readers. Meadows found that Aboriginal people have often been left unnamed in Australian newspapers, indicating a form of othering. Arguably, in the presentation of the negative 'other' in the present study, the Russia leader received relatively more attention from the UK news media compared with Malaysian leaders.

The forms of naming used seemingly point to a further classification of Putin as the important 'other' while, Malaysian leaders are less important 'others'.

There are several possibilities which could explain the findings obtained above. Firstly, as indicated by Sheehy (2008: 32-33), the foreign stories were more likely to contain completely anonymous sources and this could be linked to difficulties in communication between correspondents abroad and domestic news reporters. Secondly, the UK news media are likely to provide names for Western and Russian leaders but not to the Malaysian leaders. As stated by Joye (2010), Western news media discursively reproduce a certain kind of world order, mainly a Euro-American-centred one. In other words, the Western news media tend to favour European and American news stories over those from developing countries.

Thirdly, previous studies have acknowledged the importance of 'absence' in news coverage but naming discourses such as honorification and anonymity have received relatively little attention. Hence, acknowledging the importance of 'honorification' and 'anonymity' in the news coverage of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies, the present study proposes these discursive modes as element in the construction of categories of 'us' and 'others' in the news reporting of distant suffering. Indeed, anonymity could relegate an 'other' to become an even less important 'other'. Fourthly, the study supports the suggestions in previous studies (An & Gower, 2009; Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011; Windsor et al., 2014) that the media typically identify the scope of blame and responsibility in the news reporting of human suffering. In conclusion, the present study suggests that the construction of 'us' and 'others' can be achieved through lexicalisation focusing on honorification and anonymity in the news reporting of human suffering.

7.5 Research question three: What are the a) Malaysian and b) UK university students' attitudes towards the Malaysian airline tragedies?

To some extent, the findings in this study support the findings of Kyriakidou's (2015) research on the media witnessing of distant suffering. Both studies show that the use of affective language was common in the respondents' comments about a disaster. Kyriakidou (ibid) referred to emotional reactions as 'affective witnessing'. In this context, audience engagement was characterised by intense emotional involvement with human pain. Based on the findings of the present study, the two groups of students provided a range of keywords to describe the air tragedies as events filled

with sadness, anger, fear and curiosity. This emotional engagement illustrated an apparent collapse of distance between Malaysia and the UK on the basis of a perceived sameness. However, from a critical perspective, the UK respondents' overall engagement with the tragedy of MH370 favoured sentimentality over reflection and judgement. Conversely, in the tragedy of MH17, the UK students showed stronger criticism and greater emotional involvement with the shooting down of flight MH17. As indicated by Kyriakidou (2015), the relevance of a disaster to respondents is likely to be based on geographical distance and cultural similarity. Seemingly, the UK students were generally more engaged with the tragedy of MH17 which occurred in the Ukraine in comparison to the incident of MH370 which took place in Asia. Additionally, the findings also provide evidence in support of Huiberts & Joye's (2017) conclusion that shared or overlapping experience is crucial in determining attitudes to tragedies.

These emphases could also be applied to the Malaysian comments, showing a positive relationship between geographical and experiential proximity and the students' attitudes to the disasters. In light of the earlier discussion, expressions of emotional involvement such as anger and criticism among the Malaysian respondents were stronger in the MH370 disaster compared to the shooting down of flight MH17. For instance, in the tragedy of MH370, anger and blame such as '*stupid bomoh*' and '*embarrassing*' were identified in the comments, indicating clear disapproval concerning a particular issue. On the other hand, anger was missing from responses to the tragedy of MH17. As anger can be characterised as a response to something that is felt to be unfair or damaging (Pantti, 2011: 231), its absence could suggest a passive attitude among the Malaysian students in relation to international threats and terrorist involvement in the tragedy of MH17.

In addition, 'politicised witnessing' was also observed in the present study. Kyriakidou (2015: 224) claimed that this type of witnessing involves the implication of political discourse in audiences' comments about suffering. Specifically, Kyriakidou (ibid) found that in politicised witnessing audiences tend to move from the scene of suffering to the search for causes and attributions of blame and political responsibility for the events. In the tragedy of MH17, terrorism was highlighted in the Malaysian and UK comments to indicate a terrorist attack (e.g. '*murder*', '*illegal*') as the root cause of the suffering. Additionally, the two groups of students also described the tragedy of MH370 in terms of the lack of capability among the local authorities (e.g. '*cover up*', '*useless*'), and also attributed the disaster to human-made causes (e.g. '*hijacked*').

Moreover, some students' emotional involvement with the suffering can be best described in terms of feelings of indignation, addressing both the perceived causes of the suffering as well as the perceived perpetrators, which again pointed to the presence of 'politicised witnessing'.

According to Kyriakidou (2015: 222), 'ecstatic witnessing' includes expressions of emotional involvement (similar to affective witnessing) but at an intensified level, revealing a sense of the immediacy of the experience of witnessing. In this case, audiences tend to focus more on the urgency of the situation rather than the emotions of suffering (ibid). In the present study, the sense of urgency was constructed through the use of temporal deixis such as '*when to solve*' (in the tragedy of MH17), highlighting an urgent need to address and solve the mystery of the violent act. Kyriakidou (ibid) further claimed that the concept of ecstatic witnessing includes the construction of audiences as fully immersed witnesses in the scene of suffering as if they are watching it take place in front of their eyes. Overall, the two air tragedies were frequently described in relation to the moment the disaster took place such as '*fall down*', '*crash*' (in the tragedy of MH17) and '*hijacked*', '*broken*' (in the tragedy of MH370), seemingly constructing a direct link to the scene of suffering. In other words, the findings suggest a closer relationship between the students and the distant suffering.

In 'detached witnessing', the experience of the suffering of others is viewed as something remote or irrelevant to the audience's everyday life (Kyriakidou, 2015: 226). The distinctive characteristics of this kind of discourse comprise the absence of affective language as well as the narration of an experience of witnessing the events. In the present study, the moral engagement of the students with the suffering was constructed in distinctive ways. Indeed, 'emotions/experience' was a category that carried the second highest degree of salience for the two groups of students in the two air tragedies. In this respect, distant sufferers seemingly entered the moral space of the students which, in turn, eliminated the possibility of 'detached witnessing' among the students towards the air crises.

Overall, the Malaysian and the UK students' comments were broadly negative in relation to the tragedies. Their choices of words comprised mainly of terms relating to 'politicised' and 'affective witnessing', focusing on conflicts arising from the tragedies and emotions associated with the suffering. Strong disapproval appeared to dominate in their responses in relation to the suffering. The UK respondents were found to be

more engaged with the tragedy of MH17 based on their comments which were emotive rather than reflective, whilst the Malaysians responses to MH370 had considerably greater associations with multiple forms of emotion and judgement. Based on these observations, it seems reasonable to suggest that distance has a crucial effect on the audiences' attitudes towards a tragedy. As indicated by von Engelhardt & Jansz (2015), distance refers not only to geographical, cultural and ethnic relationships but also to shared experience between audiences and distant sufferers. Here, the keywords '*Newcastle fans*' were used by UK respondents to describe MH17, implying not only involvement with victims of the tragedy but a shared experience of loss.

In a similar vein, Kopytowska's (2015) study of the mediation of distance in television news showed that the smaller the spatiotemporal distance between the audience and the events presented, the greater the chance of emotional involvement. In line with research conducted by Kopytowska (2015) and von Engelhardt & Jansz (2015), the present study further suggests that the distance between a suspected perpetrator and the audience is likely to trigger greater involvement in suffering. As one can see from the results of the data analysis in chapter 6, the Malaysian respondents generally paid more attention to the mismanagement of MH370 on the part of local authorities rather than Russia which was suspected of shooting down flight MH17. A similar result was found in the UK news media. Therefore, the present researcher proposes that, in addition to geographical distance between events and audiences, geographical distance between those perceived responsible for the events and audiences could also determine attitudes toward suffering.

7.6 Research question four: To what extent, and, in what ways, are there a) similarities and b) differences between the construction of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies MH370 and MH17 in the Malaysian and UK newspapers and Malaysian and UK university students' attitudes toward the tragedies?

According to Maier et al. (2016: 1014), it has long been recognised that the news does have the power to influence human attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, there has been a growing body of empirical studies which have investigated mediated experience and audience reactions to distant suffering (Höijer, 2004; Seu, 2010; Scott, 2014; Kyriakidou, 2015; von Engelhardt & Jansz, 2015). These authors examined specific modes of representation of distant suffering that either facilitate or discourage emotional and moral engagement with the suffering. Such modes include

domestication (Huiberts & Joye, 2017), an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy (Kyriakidou, 2008, Joye, 2010), typologies of news stories (Chouliaraki, 2008), media images (Höijer, 2004) and emotional news frames (Kim & Cameron, 2011).

It should be acknowledged that the comparison of the newspapers and the attitudes study were conducted in a more general context. Given that the university students may not necessarily have had access to the selected newspapers, the results in terms of similarities and/or differences could only suggest the potential effects of news on the students' attitudes as a whole, thus, may not tell us directly how media discourses were internalised. As stated by Baker et al. (2012: 275), readers are not passive 'dustbin', since meaning is created from the interaction between a text and its readers. In addition, readers may not regularly purchase specific newspapers which make them reluctant to comment about certain articles or issues (ibid).

Overall, the quantitative analysis found that some discourses evident in the newspapers are similar to the students' comments whereas others are not. For example, the analysis suggests that the discourse of 'us' versus 'other' seemingly do not reflect opinions of the Malaysian university students. In the Malaysian news corpus, the notion of 'us' (Malaysia) and 'other' (non-Malaysia) was clearly constructed. Stories relating to local government were amplified in the news reports, with very little attention paid to international events and foreign elites. An excellent example was revealed in the construction of the MH17 tragedy in the Malaysian newspapers, in which the term '*Russia*' was absent from the keyword list whilst local ministers (e.g. '*Najib*') dominated the news coverage. Even so, the Malaysian students often demonstrated negative attitudes towards the Malaysian authorities as indicated in the subcategory of condemnation (see section 6.3.2). In the attitudes study, '*Russia*' was mentioned by a number of the Malaysian students and the keyword was also accompanied by words with negative connotation such as '*cruel*', '*shot down*' and '*deliberately*'.

To some extent, the constructions of 'us' and 'other' in the UK newspapers were similar to the comments made by the UK students, but there was a potential refusal of the classification as well. The corpus-based analysis suggests a tendency for the UK news media to construct the air tragedies with a classification of the capable 'us' (UK) and incapable 'other' (Malaysia); good 'us' (US and UK) and evil 'other' (Russia). However, the dichotomy of capable 'us' and incapable 'other' or negative evaluations of the Malaysian authorities were not observed in the students' comments. Perhaps

there was a link with social desirability bias in that the UK students may have provided comments that made them appear polite and unprejudiced to the researcher, who comes from Malaysia. On the other hand, the news construction of an evil 'other' appeared to be shared by the UK students. As can be seen in the tragedy of MH17, the UK students expressed stronger condemnation of the shooting down of the aircraft as inhuman and cruel.

The examination of the affective responses provided further indicative results. The analysis revealed that the UK students expressed slightly more fear and anger regarding the tragedy of MH17 when compared to the tragedy of MH370 where responses were dominated by sadness. In this case, there might be a connection between different news frames and the students' affective responses. In the tragedy of MH17, there was frequent coverage of war-related issues. In contrast, in the construction of the MH370 tragedy journalists were more focused on providing in-depth, analytical coverage in trying solve the mystery. The findings suggest the possibility that the news framing of conflicts and war tended to increase the experience of emotions of fear and anger among the students as opposed to news frames oriented to problem-solving. Such a rationale is again in line with the findings of the study conducted by Kim & Cameron (2011), that participants exposed to anger-oriented news have more negative attitudes (e.g. anger) toward the responsible party than those exposed to sadness-oriented news, and vice versa. In fact, this study also provides evidence in support of Nabi's (2002) work which showed that news stories about terrorism were likely to elicit anger or fear. Valkenburg et al. (1999) provided an explanation of such results, claiming that crime is a highly salient issue which is more likely to provoke emotional thoughts about events in the audiences' own personal lives. Story framing about terrorism could have had a potential effect on perceived danger regarding the crisis among the students.

Even though the notions of blame and anger were found in the Malaysian students' comments to some extent, the analysis also revealed that the recovery discourse promoted in Malaysian newspapers may have been shared by the Malaysian students. For instance, the coverage of the victims in the news stories seemingly influenced the affective responses among the students. According to Kim & Cameron (2011), emotional news frames are likely to affect audiences' emotional responses to a particular crisis. They found that news about relief for and the wellbeing of crisis victims tends to increase public compassion in comparison to the news focusing on justice, the law and sanctions. In other words, sadness-oriented news coverage may

involve more favourable behavioural intentions (e.g. supportiveness) in response to intensive emotional appeals.

In the Malaysian news corpus, journalists seemed to maximise the human interest framing, and emphasised how the victims' situations have been relieved. As expected, based on Kim & Cameron's (2011) study of the effect of news frames, the Malaysian students' comments focused largely on emotions of sadness about the suffering arising from the crises. Although the emotion of anger was revealed in the comments in relation to the mismanagement of the tragedy of MH370, sadness appeared to dominate the students' responses. This finding is also consistent with the results of studies by Coombs & Holladay (2005) and Coombs (2007) which indicated that expressing concern for victims and reinforcing compassion through compensation can produce strong feelings of sympathy and reduce the expression of anger. In addition, the lack of coverage of war-related issues in the newspapers in coverage of the tragedy of MH17, followed by the absence of the emotion of anger among the students, provides further evidence to support the positive effect of news framing on audience emotions in response to the tragedies. Hence, the findings suggest that differences in news framing can potentially influence affective responses.

To some extent, this finding is consistent with the results of some previous studies (e.g. Valkenburg et al., 1999; Moeller, 2006; Entman, 2007; Joye, 2010) which found that news frames had a crucial impact on audiences' interpretations of and attitudes towards issues. For instance, Valkenburg et al.'s (1999: 562) study on the effects of news frames on readers' thoughts and recall indicated that the ways in which the news stories were framed had a significant effect on the thoughts of audiences. Valkenburg et al. found that respondents exposed to news framing in terms of human interest emphasised emotions in their responses significantly more often. At the same time, respondents who had read conflict-related news stories were more likely to express thoughts that involved conflict. Hence, it was concluded that news accounts have considerable power in influencing the audience's beliefs and memories about particular public issues, events and people. In accordance with these previous studies, the present study offers further insight into what kinds of news discourses were likely to be shared by Malaysian and UK students. In addition, the findings also suggest that different news stories had different emotional impacts on the students. This is particularly true for negative emotions such as fear and anger about the attacks. As indicated by Höijer (2004), there is a tendency for public emotional

engagement with news media when the focus is on innocent victims, war and other forms of violence.

However, a question which remains concerns why some news discourses of the air tragedies were shared by the students while others were not. Various possibilities could explain such results. Firstly, it could be due to the perceived trustworthiness of news sources in general. Numerous studies have acknowledged that the news is a constructed form of reality (e.g. Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995b; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), principally because it is considered to be culturally and socially constructed rather than 'natural'. Likewise, Bell (1991: 156) stressed that the news is not neutral, but reflects the ideologies and priorities held in society. In Malaysia, the newspapers are clearly controlled by the government (see Leong & Yap, 2017 for a more detailed discussion), deterring journalists from carrying out independent and investigative journalism (Netto, 2002: 18). Additionally, the limited resources of and financial constraints on news media could encourage the spread of corruption, intimidation and influence from political forces in the country (Cole, 2006: 55). Political control over news media has prevented the public from obtaining reliable information, criticising government policies, and considering solutions to difficult social problems (Newman, 2016: 64). Indeed, distrust of the news media has become so acute that many people turn to social media such as blogs and Twitter to keep abreast of national and world events (Newman, *ibid*). Therefore, the emergence of social media may have affected the exposure to information among university students. Possibly, the students may have referred more frequently to social media rather than newspapers for information about the tragedies.

According to Shemberger (2017: 234), social media have been used to encourage collective action to aid victims in a crisis. This may help to explain the students' greater compassion concerning suffering and the lack of an effect of the news media in promoting a dichotomy of 'us' versus 'others' among the students. Given the rapid evolution of different types of social media available for the public to obtain news and information, the news media are potentially facing a decline in audience sizes (Ward, 2016). However, the tendency of the newspapers to influence the emotions of audiences should not be underestimated. As indicated by Kim & Cameron (2011), the emotional framing of a crisis in the news media can still influence the attitudes of the publics. In conclusion, the findings of the present study suggest that news framing exerted an effect on the audience's emotions concerning the air tragedies. For instance, news stories about the wellbeing of victims tended to elicit sadness and

compassion among the students, whereas war-related news stories were likely to provoke anger and fear. At the same time, news frames had relatively little effect on the audiences' attitudes regarding a classification of 'us' and 'others'. Therefore, it can be argued that war and human-interest are important to audiences in comparison to social classifications or self-interest in a context of human suffering.

7.7 Implications of the study

This study has provided an in-depth analysis of the two Malaysian Airlines tragedies in terms of both the media coverage and students' responses to a survey. This study can offer a more comprehensive understanding of discourses and ideologies surrounding the two examples of suffering and their public uptake. Studying the keywords of suffering in two public contexts, media and the views of the public can help us to understand better the mediatisation of suffering and its wider effects. Methodologically, the present study has triangulated findings using two research methods, a corpus-based discourse study and an attitudes study, offering a more comprehensive and rigorous picture of public discourse surrounding the air tragedies. According to Jaworska & Themistocleous (2018), corpus linguists are generally concerned with aspects of discourse and tend to merely study textual media data with a lack of engagement with the community at large. Therefore, this present study offers a picture of how corpus-based discourse analysis can effectively be brought together with the study of attitudes to provide much more nuanced insights into public discourse by including voices from university students.

In addition, this study proposes that keywords analysis is useful in examining both the media and public discourse. In this study, the researcher has demonstrated how the process of keywords analysis is able to recognise the salience of categories of representation of the Malaysian Airlines tragedies in newspapers. In the attitudes study, the keywords technique allowed the identification of the students' responses and attitudes towards the air crises. By using keywords analysis, this study is able to reap the benefits from statistical analysis (based on the frequency scores) to provide more reliable findings concerning the lexical items that are statistically salient in the corpora and to the respondents. Moreover, keywords analysis helps us to gain a view of the wider characteristics of media and public discourse. The keywords analysis enables us to see whether or not certain topics carried more salience than others in media or public settings, and also how the topics are accepted, shared or refuted. Given that the data analysis instrument in the keywords study of the university student

included free-response items, the respondents were allowed to provide richer answers that were not restricted to limited or predetermined responses (Garrett et al., 2005: 50).

The present study provides some evidence about the construction of the two striking Malaysian Airlines tragedies in the Malaysian and UK newspapers. Essentially, the present study provides additional insights into the classification of 'us' and 'others' in the presentation of suffering in the news media, suggesting that such a classification could be actively achieved through discursive strategies of honorification in the Malaysian news media and anonymity in the UK news media. Therefore, it is hoped that the results offer a useful contribution to knowledge in relation to the representation of suffering in the media. In addition, according to Yulita (2013: 207), 'othering can take many forms, from direct and overt hatred to more subtle indirect ways, which can be hard to identify, notice or be aware of'. van Dijk (2000: 34) also observed that 'othering' can be expressed, enacted and confirmed by text and talk, such as daily conversations, board interviews, TV programmes and news reports in the press. Therefore, by identifying the constructions of 'othering', we potentially become more conscious of and sensitive to others around us, and more aware of how (and/or if) we collude in creating and perpetuating the othering process.

Furthermore, there seem to be a lack of published studies that describe Malaysian media discourse, and thus this study serves as an up-to-date guide for future studies concerning Malaysian news media. On a broader social level, the findings of the present study help in understanding the attitudes of audiences towards air tragedies both locally (in Malaysia) and globally (in the UK). Although this present study provides some useful guidelines to future research, there are several caveats that need to be highlighted.

7.8 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Although these findings have provided useful information about the mediatisation of the two Malaysian Airlines tragedies and its wider effects, it is clear that a number of limitations exist and, as a result, further research is needed. Firstly, in order to restrict the data to a more manageable volume, the research considered only two quality UK newspapers (*The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*) and two quality Malaysian newspapers (*New Straits Times* and *Malaysian General News*). Clearly, a study of a broader range of newspapers would help us understand better the construction of the

air crises in the news. In addition, it is important to clarify that the initial plan of the study was to examine the two Malaysian English newspapers with the largest readerships: *The Star* and *New Straits Times*. Given that the *The Star* was not available online in NexisUK and other databases, efforts were made to contact the publisher. However, the researcher received no response. Hence, in light of the time constraints in this study, the newswire service *Malaysian General News* was accessed at NexisUK to replace *The Star* for the collection of data. In this case, this newswire service was treated as similar to a quality newspaper such as the '*New Straits Times*'. Therefore, when undertaking comparable research in the future, it may be prudent to include *The Star* in the analysis. Secondly, the present study focuses merely on newspapers, and the influence of social media such as blogs and Twitter on the construction of the air tragedies was not fully explored. Hence, it would be interesting to investigate how air tragedies are covered through different media.

Secondly, in terms of the attitudes study, the respondents chosen to participate in the study consisted of only 50 university students from the UK and Malaysia. In order to abide by the schedule of the research, data collection was conducted during the summer holidays. Given that this period is generally a more difficult time for data collection, the researcher considered that 50 university students would be a realistic sample size to achieve in the time available in the present study. Therefore, in future studies, it would be worthwhile to use a larger sample of respondents to ensure better the validity and generalisability of the findings. In addition, the present study concentrates mainly on the participants' nationality as representative of news audiences, and analysis according to socio-biographical variables such as age and gender was not conducted. Therefore, in future research these variables could be included to determine the correlation between the effects of news and the respondents' attitudes in terms of age and gender. Moreover, although considerable care has been taken to minimise the effects of social desirability bias, it is possible that in some cases, for example, for reasons of political correctness, students might have reported socially desirable attitudes as opposed to what they truly believed. In other words, they may have hidden certain negative opinions. Therefore, future research requires the careful targeting of respondents.

Thirdly, although the methodological strength of this study is that triangulation using two research methods a corpus-based discourse study and an attitudes study was employed, the investigation has been mainly informed by keyword analysis. Hence, much more work still needs to be done in order to further develop the research

methods, and ideally collocation analysis should be further explored in future studies. Furthermore, there is a requirement for further in-depth studies to be conducted investigating how news stories influence the attitudes of readers towards air tragedies. The analysis in the present study suggests potential effects of the news on the students' attitudes towards the two tragedies. However, the relationship between the newspapers study and the attitudes study is not always clear. Therefore, it will be interesting to recruit specific newspaper readers (such as of NST, The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph) as participants to examine the effect of the respective newspapers on their attitudes, perhaps revealing a more straightforward relationship between the news media and attitudes studies.

Additionally, a more detailed statistical analysis would be useful to determine the effects of news discourses on readers' attitudes towards tragedies. The present study offers a basic statistical analysis based on frequencies of keyword occurrence obtained from corpus-based analysis and percentages (adopted from Garrett et al., 2006). Given the volume of data in the attitudes study is relatively small, with only 300 keywords per tragedy, the researcher decided to use a more simple quantitative analysis using mainly calculations of percentages. Hence, in future studies, larger volumes of data can be gathered in conjunction along with more in-depth statistical testing in order to determine if differences in the keywords provided by the students are significant and that it is unlikely that they could be due to random variation.

Fourthly, it has long been recognised that the media in Malaysia are tightly controlled by the government (Taman et al. 2012: 50). As a result, the presence of a strong political discourse was expected in the findings of the study. Government control over the news media is more likely to limit the provision of information unfavourable to the government. However, it would be interesting to identify how the two air tragedies are constructed when the media are controlled by other types of special interest with their own biases. Given that the ownership of the media is beyond our control, relevant studies could serve to increase public awareness about the issues.

The findings of this study describe the ways in which othering practices are manifested in news media in relation to human suffering. These practices include the use of nomination as honorification and anonymity. The analysis focused primarily on Malaysian and UK newspapers; further work is required to explore how nomination is used in other newspapers (such as The New York Times, The Australian, or China Daily) or on social media (forums, Twitter, blogs) in contributing to othering practices.

To foster healthy and effective interactions between news media and audiences, we must continue to unmask othering practices and to support truly equitable news reporting, particularly of human suffering.

In addition, it cannot be claimed that the present researcher has approached the analysis from a completely unbiased position, particularly in the classification of semantic categories. As stated by Baker et al. (2012: 274), all social research is biased to some extent. Therefore, the researcher would like to acknowledge that, to an extent, her interpretations of data are still led by aspects of her own identity (such as being Malaysian). In addition, it should also be mentioned that the classification of keywords (particularly in the student elicitation study) is very approximate. Some keywords could equally well be placed in other categories. Although subjective, the classification does give us a point of departure. The researcher has tried to reduce the effect of cultural bias and subjective grouping by reviewing the categories multiple times and sharing her findings with people from different backgrounds, and this has helped the researcher when framing her interpretations. However, the subjective groupings still require further refinement.

Notes:

1. BBC News. Malaysia profile – Media. (5 September 2017). Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15384221>
2. Freedom House. Freedom of the press 2015. (23 March 2017). Retrieved from https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FreedomofthePress_2015_FINAL.pdf

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Keyword list – MH370

The 50 most frequent keywords of 'MH370' in the Malaysian and UK news corpus

| Malaysian news corpus | | | | UK news corpus | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| | Keywords | Frequency | Keyness | Keywords | Frequency | Keyness |
| 1 | MH370 | 1,609 | 147.0 | MH370 | 834 | 50.7 |
| 2 | Malaysia | 542 | 47.6 | plane | 859 | 40.3 |
| 3 | search | 681 | 39.3 | flight | 854 | 37.2 |
| 4 | MAS | 352 | 32.1 | Malaysia | 633 | 36.7 |
| 5 | aircraft | 486 | 29.9 | Malaysian | 522 | 31.4 |
| 6 | passengers | 386 | 29.8 | Airlines | 443 | 26.5 |
| 7 | Flight | 327 | 29.3 | search | 681 | 26.0 |
| 8 | Ocean | 312 | 27.6 | passengers | 362 | 18.6 |
| 9 | Malaysian | 287 | 26.5 | aircraft | 432 | 17.7 |
| 10 | flight | 388 | 26.0 | Ocean | 286 | 16.9 |
| 11 | Datuk | 273 | 25.7 | missing | 371 | 16.9 |
| 12 | Airlines | 263 | 24.1 | Kuala | 257 | 16.1 |
| 13 | missing | 338 | 23.2 | Lumpur | 255 | 16.0 |
| 14 | Hishammuddin | 238 | 22.6 | Beijing | 253 | 15.4 |
| 15 | Indian | 311 | 21.6 | radar | 250 | 15.1 |
| 16 | crew | 284 | 21.4 | Indian | 279 | 13.0 |
| 17 | China | 291 | 20.0 | Chinese | 279 | 12.9 |
| 18 | Seri | 205 | 19.6 | satellite | 203 | 11.6 |
| 19 | radar | 204 | 18.5 | Boeing | 184 | 11.6 |
| 20 | Najib | 190 | 18.2 | plane's | 172 | 11.2 |
| 21 | southern | 252 | 18.1 | Malaysia's | 162 | 10.6 |
| 22 | Beijing | 181 | 16.7 | disappearance | 160 | 10.0 |
| 23 | March | 387 | 15.8 | debris | 161 | 9.9 |
| 24 | plane | 201 | 14.9 | China | 198 | 9.3 |
| 25 | Boeing | 141 | 13.4 | minister | 201 | 9.3 |
| 26 | Kuala | 121 | 11.9 | crew | 177 | 9.2 |
| 27 | Tun | 120 | 11.8 | relatives | 172 | 9.2 |
| 28 | Lumpur | 119 | 11.7 | board | 273 | 9.1 |
| 29 | Australia | 168 | 11.6 | investigators | 142 | 9.0 |
| 30 | satellite | 132 | 11.5 | airline | 143 | 8.8 |
| 31 | disappearance | 122 | 11.4 | Australian | 162 | 8.7 |
| 32 | families | 202 | 11.4 | wreckage | 133 | 8.6 |
| 33 | SAR | 110 | 10.9 | Flight | 135 | 8.6 |
| 34 | Transport | 136 | 10.8 | aviation | 133 | 8.5 |
| 35 | Airport | 112 | 10.5 | crashed | 137 | 8.2 |
| 36 | Minister | 290 | 10.3 | families | 213 | 8.1 |
| 37 | Sea | 118 | 9.2 | cockpit | 121 | 7.8 |
| 38 | Aviation | 94 | 9.2 | southern | 154 | 7.7 |
| 39 | Chinese | 127 | 9.2 | passports | 111 | 7.4 |
| 40 | investigation | 128 | 8.9 | data | 281 | 7.4 |
| 41 | Razak | 87 | 8.9 | air | 276 | 7.4 |
| 42 | KL | 86 | 8.8 | officials | 169 | 7.3 |
| 43 | Australian | 107 | 8.8 | authorities | 218 | 6.7 |
| 44 | board | 168 | 8.6 | pilots | 103 | 6.6 |
| 45 | International | 148 | 8.5 | crash | 116 | 6.6 |
| 46 | Air | 107 | 8.5 | disappeared | 124 | 6.5 |
| 47 | disappeared | 108 | 8.4 | ocean | 104 | 6.5 |
| 48 | Prime | 149 | 8.1 | Inmarsat | 91 | 6.4 |
| 49 | operation | 148 | 7.9 | vanished | 98 | 6.2 |
| 50 | ended | 107 | 7.3 | Hishammuddin | 88 | 6.2 |

Appendix 2: Keyword list – MH17

The 50 most frequent keywords of ‘MH17’ in the Malaysian and UK news corpus

| Malaysian News Corpus | | | | UK News Corpus | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| | word | Frequency | keyness | word | Frequency | keyness |
| 1 | MH17 | 1,191 | 150.8 | MH17 | 636 | 42.5 |
| 2 | Malaysia | 507 | 61.5 | Ukraine | 549 | 34.4 |
| 3 | Ukraine | 335 | 40.3 | Russia | 565 | 28.5 |
| 4 | victims | 372 | 38.6 | crash | 432 | 24.2 |
| 5 | MAS | 268 | 33.8 | Ukrainian | 345 | 22.5 |
| 6 | Malaysian | 257 | 32.6 | Putin | 296 | 20.3 |
| 7 | Flight | 243 | 30.1 | Russian | 419 | 19.2 |
| 8 | tragedy | 255 | 28.9 | missile | 292 | 18.7 |
| 9 | Airlines | 207 | 26.2 | Malaysia | 287 | 18.7 |
| 10 | passengers | 242 | 26.0 | sanctions | 299 | 18.4 |
| 11 | Lumpur | 200 | 25.9 | flight | 363 | 17.7 |
| 12 | crew | 249 | 25.8 | rebels | 280 | 17.5 |
| 13 | Kuala | 199 | 25.8 | Airlines | 258 | 17.3 |
| 14 | Amsterdam | 208 | 25.3 | plane | 315 | 16.7 |
| 15 | Datuk | 185 | 24.2 | separatists | 235 | 16.2 |
| 16 | crash | 212 | 22.9 | site | 411 | 15.1 |
| 17 | remains | 314 | 22.7 | EU | 190 | 13.4 |
| 18 | flight | 236 | 22.0 | Dutch | 226 | 13.0 |
| 19 | Seri | 165 | 21.7 | Donetsk | 149 | 10.7 |
| 20 | Najib | 156 | 20.6 | eastern | 182 | 10.3 |
| 21 | Malaysians | 155 | 20.5 | Buk | 138 | 10.0 |
| 22 | aircraft | 231 | 19.9 | Cameron | 142 | 9.6 |
| 23 | investigation | 172 | 16.0 | bodies | 216 | 9.5 |
| 24 | Netherlands | 134 | 15.8 | Malaysian | 133 | 9.5 |
| 25 | shot | 170 | 13.2 | minister | 184 | 9.3 |
| 26 | eastern | 122 | 13.2 | Russia's | 125 | 8.7 |
| 27 | Boeing | 96 | 12.7 | Moscow | 143 | 8.3 |
| 28 | Ukrainian | 97 | 12.7 | Vladimir | 114 | 8.3 |
| 29 | July | 190 | 12.2 | shot | 198 | 8.2 |
| 30 | families | 150 | 11.7 | rebel | 120 | 8.1 |
| 31 | Dutch | 99 | 11.1 | investigators | 114 | 8.0 |
| 32 | justice | 113 | 11.1 | victims | 127 | 7.5 |
| 33 | incident | 106 | 10.9 | Obama | 98 | 7.4 |
| 34 | crashed | 88 | 10.8 | Kiev | 98 | 7.2 |
| 35 | flying | 102 | 10.2 | Ukraine's | 95 | 7.1 |
| 36 | MH370 | 72 | 10.1 | Putin's | 93 | 7.1 |
| 37 | Mohd | 72 | 10.1 | jet | 101 | 6.9 |
| 38 | Tun | 72 | 10.0 | fired | 108 | 6.9 |
| 39 | Razak | 69 | 9.7 | tragedy | 105 | 6.9 |
| 40 | carrying | 107 | 9.6 | prime | 117 | 6.7 |
| 41 | Minister | 193 | 9.6 | Flight | 92 | 6.7 |
| 42 | Liow | 67 | 9.4 | disaster | 109 | 6.6 |
| 43 | plane | 83 | 8.9 | military | 174 | 6.4 |
| 44 | today | 180 | 8.7 | Kuala | 83 | 6.3 |
| 45 | board | 121 | 8.5 | experts | 106 | 6.3 |
| 46 | downing | 60 | 8.5 | Lumpur | 82 | 6.3 |
| 47 | Australia | 83 | 8.2 | aircraft | 130 | 6.3 |
| 48 | International | 100 | 8.0 | MH370 | 79 | 6.1 |
| 49 | site | 106 | 7.8 | Russians | 89 | 6.1 |
| 50 | ceremony | 63 | 7.8 | international | 188 | 6.0 |

Appendix 3: Semantic Categories – MH370

Identified semantic categories from Malaysian (n= 50) and UK respondents (n= 50) in the tragedy of MH370

| Semantic Category | Malaysian Respondents | UK Respondents |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Conflict | conspiracy, unknown, mysterious, impossible, magic, crash, weird, mismanagement, cover up, sudden, irresponsible, ridiculous, useless, inefficient, Missing in Action (MIA), chaotic, stupid bomoh (shaman), danger, terrorist, confusion, mangosteen, missing, loss, disconnection, death, hijacked, disappearance, untraceable, unpredictable | odd, weird, unusual, bizarre, unsolved, unresolved, mysterious, unknown, inexplicable, confusion, conspiracy, perplexing, suspicious, crash, broken, failure, waste, irresponsible, missing, loss, cause, strange, disappearance, challenged trust in technology, disaster, accident, |
| Emotion/ Experience | sad, upset, shocked, sorrowful, anger, disappointed, fear, bad feeling, misery, unforgettable, unbelievable, curious, surprising, helpless, pain, fishy, embarrassing | curious, intriguing, interesting, alive, awful, hopeless, sad, heart-breaking, trauma, devastating, frightening, shocking, anxiety, worrying, scared, ominous, chilling, upsetting, upset, anger, somewhere still, |
| Fate | unfortunate, fate, underserving, tragedy | Unfortunate, tragedy, tragic |
| Aircraft related terms | MAS, French Airline, Air force, fly, control system, black box, track, blow | - |
| Moral/ Religion | humanity, respect, pray, Raja Bomoh (shaman), condolence, pity | Sympathy |
| Law/Politics | Najib, politics | Innocent |
| Country/ Nationality | Israel, United State, China, Australia | Malaysia, Australia, International |
| Time/ Location | 8 th March, first time | - |
| Social actors | passengers | - |
| Nature | Indian Ocean, circumstances, life | ocean, bad weather |
| Communication | search | communication, satellite |

Appendix 4: Semantic Categories – MH17

Identified semantic categories from Malaysian (n= 50) and UK respondents (n= 50) in the tragedy of MH17

| Semantic Category | Malaysian Respondents | UK Respondents |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Conflict | shot down, separatist, war, missile, careless, murder, irresponsible, deliberately, save fuel, mistake, booming, terrorism, unsystematic, dangerous, disrespectful, hijacking, terrible, inhuman, cruel, weapon, warning, collateral damage, crash, conspiracy, fall down, unexpected, wrong, unpredictable, death, when to solve, accident | war, aggression, violence, crime, terrorism, deliberate, shot down, cruel, suspicious, corruption, illegal, conflict, blame, confusion, murder, conspiracy, power, wrong, controversial, inhumane, casualties, attacked, missile, unfair, mindless, thoughtless, pointless, crash, loss, mistake, disappearance, unsure, unnecessary, unexpected, disaster, accident, injustice |
| Emotion/ Experience | sad, scary, curious, sorrow, reckless, disappointed, sadly, discouraged, shocking, helpless, unforgettable, shocked, condolence, surprise, hopeless | sad, devastating, trauma, sadness, hurt, mourning, awful, worrying, horrific, horrible, anxiety, scary, threatening, shocking, appalling, anger, outrage, upsetting, distressing, embarrassment, annoyed, tension, emotion, aggravation |
| Fate | fate, unfortunate, undeserving, unlucky, tragedy, tragic | unlucky, coincidence, unwarranted, tragedy, tragic |
| Aircraft related terms | Black box, MH370 (2), MAS, airspace breach | - |
| Moral/ Religion | Faith, compassion, pity | - |
| Law/Politics | Politics, innocent | justice, law, political, responsibility, |
| Country/ Nationality | Nation, Russia, Ukraine, Netherland | Malaysia, Russia, Ukraine, International |
| Time/ Location | 17 th July 2014, forbidden place | no fly zone |
| Social actors | passenger, victims, family, friend of mine | families, Newcastle fans |
| Nature | - | - |
| Communication | - | communication |

Appendix 5: Questionnaire

Malaysia Airline Tragedies MH370 and MH17

Section A

Instructions:

1. Please provide three keywords for 'MH370' and 'MH17'.
 - There are no right or wrong answers, please give any answers that first come into your mind.
 - **IMPORTANT: DO NOT** discuss with friends or search the internet.
 - You may refer to the diagrams below for some ideas if your wish.

| MH370 | MH17 |
|-------|------|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |

Section B

Personal Details:

Name :

Current University :

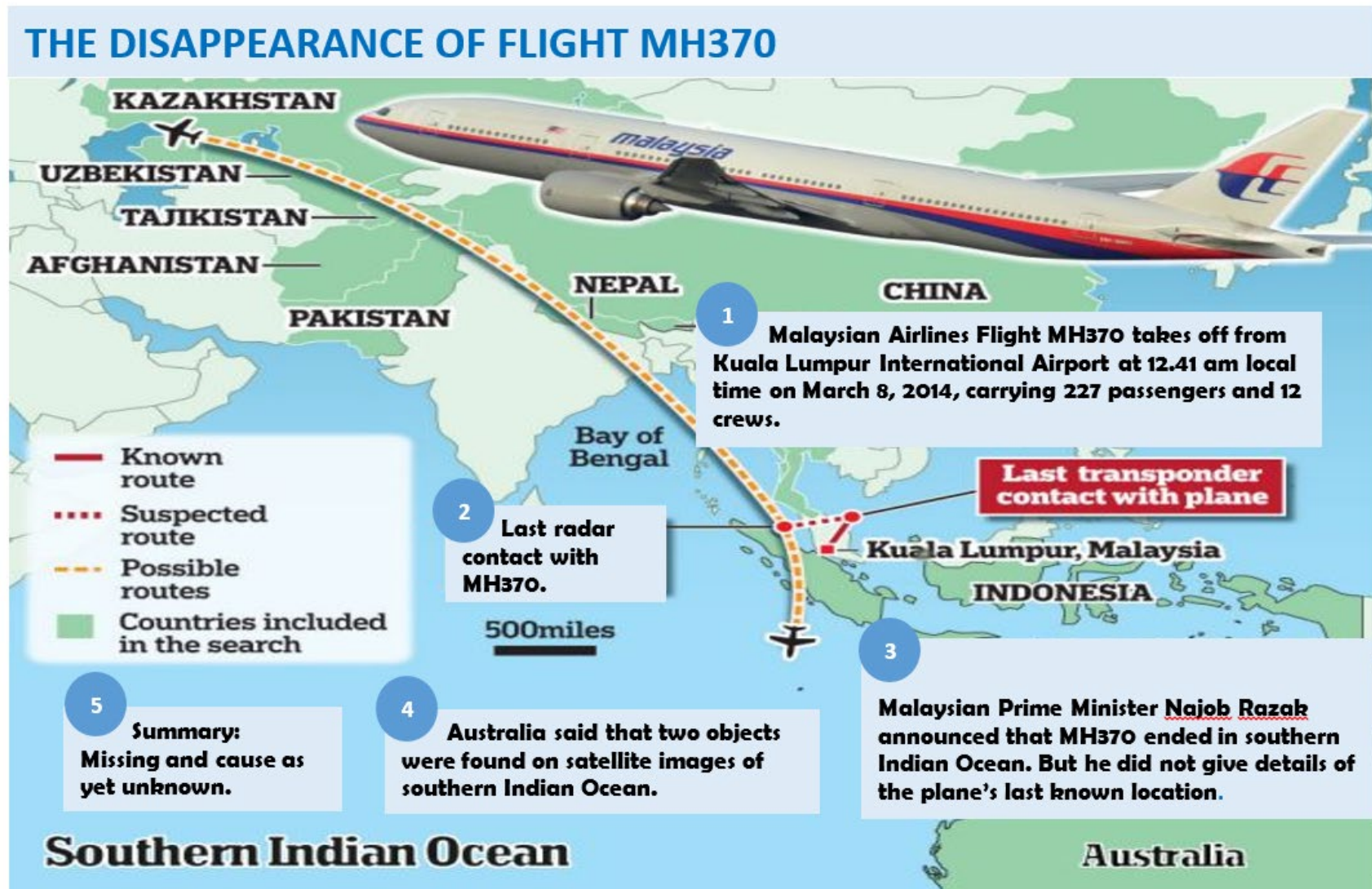
Course :

Date of birth :

Gender :

Thank you for your time!

Appendix 6: Diagram of the tragedy of MH370



Appendix 7: Diagram of the tragedy of MH17

